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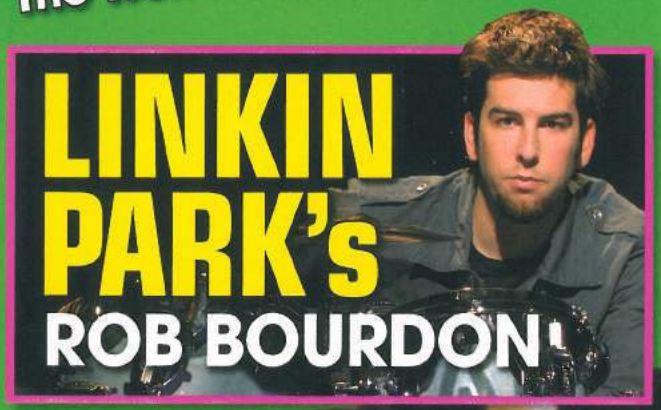
JULY 2007



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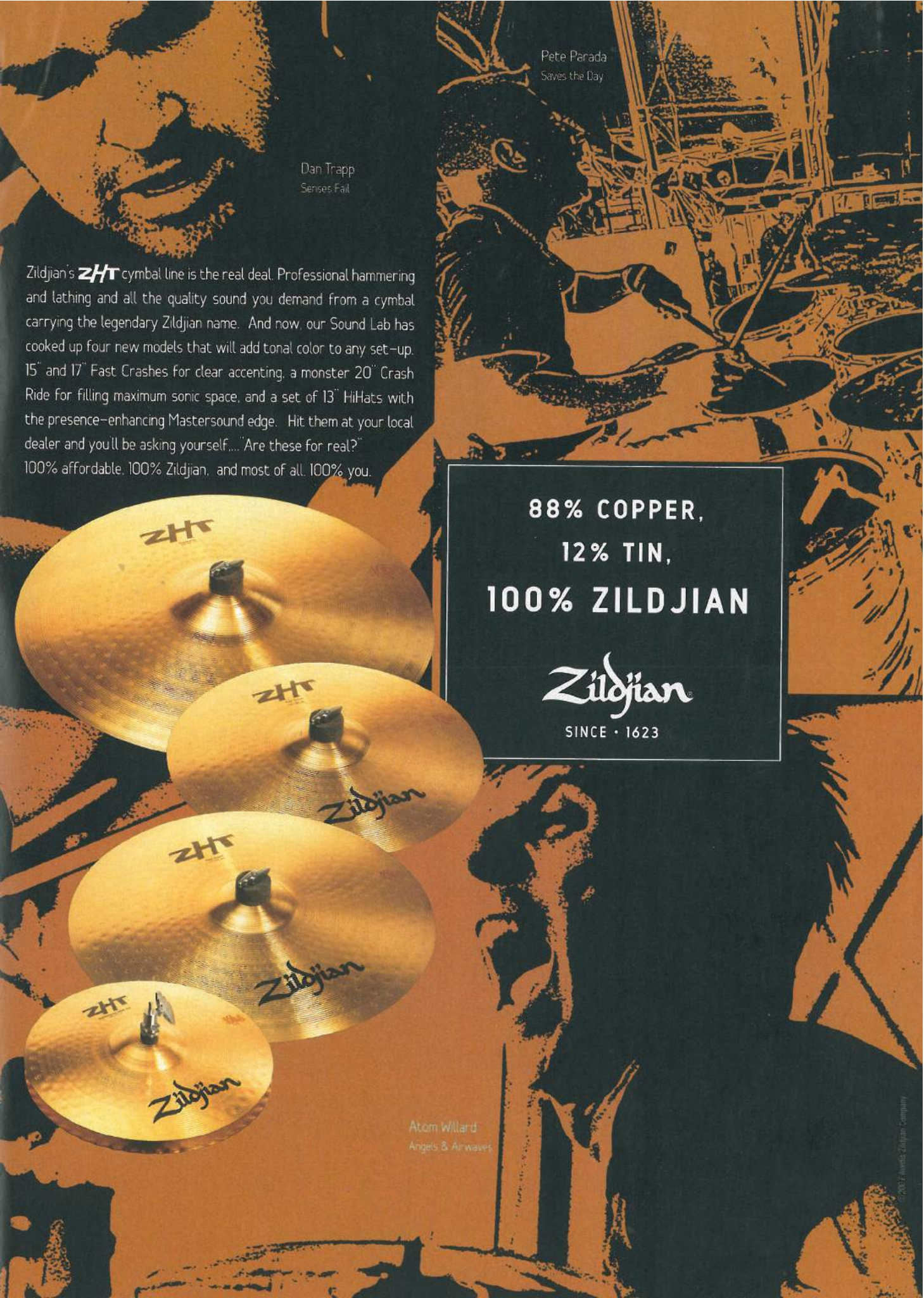
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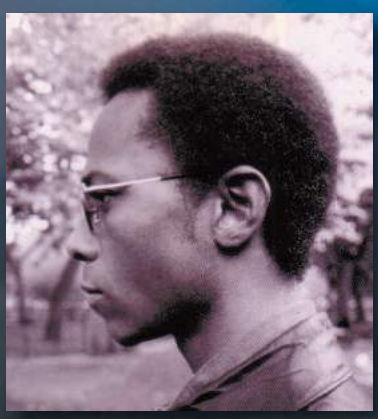

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[Readers Poll 2007- Winners]

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FEATURES

42 Modern Drummer 2007 Readers Poll Results
DeJohnette joins the MD Hall Of Fame, Colaiuta wins All-Around, and..ah, you didn't think we'd give it all away here, did you?

<< 62 Jeff Ballard
Jeff Ballard hangs with the absolute geniuses of modern jazz. Or maybe it's them hanging with him. An exclusive MD profile of today's most intriguing jazz drummer.

78 Linkin Park's Rob Bourdon
On Minutes To Midnight, Rob Bourdon and his Linkin Park bandmates went back to basics, relying more on their seasoned chops and less on studio shine.

90 James Brown
A drummer's-eye view of The Godfather—the man who gave the drummer some. Plus 10 classic JB grooves transcribed.

156 Particle's Darren Pujalet
Particle represents the best that the jam-band genre has to offer: deep grooves, cool sounds, daring dynamics—and drumming that brilliantly balances power with finesse.

Marco Soccoli

24 Update
Legendary James Brown Drummer **Clyde STUBBLEFIELD**

Kings Of Leon's **Nathan FOLLOWILL**

The Adolescents' **Derek O'BRIEN**

Kasabian's **Ian MATTHEWS**

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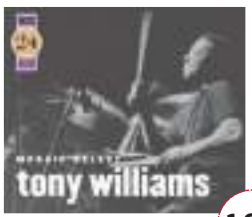
page 106

Alex Solca

108 Woodshed
Peter Erskine's Puck Productions
Jazz nobleman Peter Erskine has constructed a near-perfect environment for his many creative and business needs.

38



164

28

EDUCATION

110 Off The Record
The Jimi Hendrix Experience' s Mitch Mitchell: Axis: Bold As Love by Ed Breckenfeld

114 In The Pocket
Getting In Sync: How Coordinated Unison Drumming Can Sharpen Your Skills
by Chris Layton

116 Rudimental Symposium
Chopsbuilders: Corps-Style Exercises For All Drummers, Part 1 by Jim Casella

120 Drum Country
The Nashville Number System, Part 1: The Breakdown by Jim Riley

122 Rock ' N' Jazz Clinic
Hands, Grooves, And Fills: A Complete Curriculum by Pat Petrillo

126 Concepts
Defeating Your Demons: How To Deal With Performance Pressure
by Monty Sneddon

130 Percussion Today
Cajon For Drumset Players: Kit In A Box by John Sparrow

138 Electronic Insights
Going Mobile: Creating A Laptop-Based Studio For Drummers by Michael Dawson

146 Teachers' Forum
The New Generation: A Modern Philosophy On Drumset Teaching by Jeremy Hummel

152 Spotlight
LA Music Academy: A Decade Of Dedication by Robyn Flans

DEPARTMENTS

10 An Editor' s Overview
The Drum Gods...Smiled by Bill Miller

12 Readers' Platform

14 It' s Questionable
Hearing Protection For A Singing Drummer • Rainbow Vistalite Kit •
Creating Written Music Files • Taming A Washy Ride With Tape

18 Ask A Pro
Virgil Donati On The Elements Of Performance • Jack Johnson' s Adam Topol
On Snare Drum Tuning • Quick Beats: Primus' s Tim Alexander

164 Critique

168 Showcase

174 Drum Market
Including Vintage Corner

176 Backbeats
2007 Drummers For Jesus • UK Young Drummer Of The Year • and more

184 Kit Of The Month

EQUIPMENT

28 Product Close-Up
Pearl Vision VSX Drumkit • Meinl Byzance Jazz Cymbals • Snare Drum Of The Month:
Pork Pie 8x14 Little Squealer • Quick Looks: Remo PowerSonic Bass Drum Batter,
Ahead 5AB Hybrid Drumsticks, Set-Fast Drumset Anchors, Mighty-Grip Powder
And Gloves

38 New And Notable

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AN EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

The Drum Gods...Smiled

I' m very happy to report that 2006 proved to be a banner year for Modern Drummer. While the magazine continued to show solid growth in terms of content, subscribers, and domestic and foreign distribution, we were delighted to learn that our newsstand sales jumped up 5% (above our usual high percentage), at a time when the magazine industry as a whole dropped 5%. With so many other resources available for drummers today, I just want to say thank you for your continued strong support. Believe me, we don' t take it for granted.

To celebrate these wonderful newsstand sales numbers, a thought came to mind to create a special one-off collector' s edition of MD—a " thirteenth issue" available primarily on the newsstands. After brainstorming among the editorial staff, we came up with the idea to pay tribute to some of the most important drummers ever to pick up sticks. With that, The Drum Gods: 25 Legendary Talents Who Changed Drumming was born.

The Drum Gods highlights twenty-five of the greatest players in history, including jazz giants from Gene Krupa to Tony Williams, rock royalty from John Bonham to Neil Peart, and studio stars from Steve Gadd to Vinnie Colaiuta. The issue is loaded with biographical information, classic photos, playing tips, discographies, and musical examples that provide insight into the careers, personalities, and playing styles of these amazing artists.

While working on The Drum Gods was a labor of love for the editors of Modern Drummer—it' s been fascinating to go back and research these fantastic players—it' s also involved a lot of work. I want to thank senior editor Rick Van Horn, managing editor Adam Budofsky, and associate editors Billy Amendola and Mike Dawson, along with our entire art department, for their dedication to this project. I also want to thank the many writers and photographers who contributed as well.

The Drum Gods is now available at your favorite newsstands and bookstores, or it can be ordered at www.moderndrummer.com or by calling (973) 239-4140. (See page 153 for more information.) Thanks again!

Bill Miller

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Volume 31 Number 7

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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:
Michael Bettine, Robyn Flans, Burt Korall, Rick Mattingly, Ken Micallef, Mark Parsons, Mike Haid, Robin Tolleson, Lauren Vogel Weiss, T. Bruce Wittet.

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Carmine Appice

Thanks for the interesting and candid article about Carmine Appice. All the accolades sent Carmine' s way are well deserved. Back in the mid-1970s I saw Carmine at a drum clinic—where he performed with Buddy Rich and Joe Morello. Buddy kidded Carmine about the electronics he had hooked up to his drumkit, but you could see that Carmine was into a new approach to music.

More recently, I' ve seen Carmine with the re-formed Vanilla Fudge twice, and they' re still great. Carmine and Tim Bogert (on bass) are the atomic rhythm section of rock. And, for the record, Carmine' s mom once told me that his last name is pronounced a-PEA-see.

Thanks for forty years of inspiration, Carmine!

Vinny Rosa

When will Carmine realize that he doesn' t need to remind us of his " influence" on John Bonham all the time? Come on, Carmine, you' re revered, you' re a legend, you' re everything you ever wanted to be, and you' re even still alive.

Jim Rodrigues

It was especially great to read Carmine' s statement, " I was in everything. In high school I had orchestra, band, music theory, and harmony. It gave me a lot of experience." As a drummer and a band director in the public schools, that means a lot to me. When a star like Carmine supports school music programs in your magazine, it really inspires students and helps to promote continued support of those programs.

Glenn Ceglia

I enjoy Carmine Appice' s drumming. But since Carmine likes to let everyone know who borrowed from him, he should acknowledge that he was influenced by Dino Danelli of The Rascals. I saw Vanilla Fudge in concert in 1968, as well as on The Ed Sullivan Show. The stick twirling into a cymbal crash and then grabbing the cymbal with his hand that Carmine did came directly from Dino. Dino also had a big bass drum before Carmine did.

Ray Geraneo

The State Of Jazz Drumming

In your roundtable feature on the state of jazz drumming, Eric McPherson said about rudiments, " They' re like the alphabet to me." Rudiments are only the alphabet if you' re into military-style drumming, such as marching band or drum & bugle corps. They are rigid, inflexible patterns from another time. They came from the left brain.

The alphabet that Roy Haynes uses is called " time." Time is ever-expanding and dynamic, and it has many voices within the drumset. And it is forever re-creating itself within the right brain.

Roy said he wishes he had studied rudiments. I think they probably would have screwed up his thinking, jazz-wise. Tony Williams didn' t use flams, ruffs, singles, and doubles because they were rudiments that he had learned. When he hit two toms together, he was thinking of that kind of hitting as a different sound, not as a flam. Steve Gadd' s use of rudiments is creative and beautiful. However, I still would not call rudiments his alphabet. He swings on time.

Don Friedman

Josh And MD Save The Day

I recently sprained my right ankle just days before a double-header gig with two different bands. I couldn' t cancel, so I went back to an MD article by Josh Freese about how he overcame a foot injury while on tour. [" My New (And Improved) Left Foot," October ' 04 MD] Following Josh' s description of what he did, I shedded all week, using my left foot on the bass drum and employing two hi-hats positioned for open and closed sounds.

If it hadn' t been for MD' s coverage of such a seemingly odd story, I' d have been forced to cancel the gig altogether. So thank you very much, and please relay my thanks to Josh. Also, thank you for featuring me in the January ' 07 On The Move section. It' s helped my band and me tremendously!

Mike Bruno

Yoga And Drumming

Jeff Harrity

In regard to your April ' 07 Health & Science article, I agree that yoga is a great way to stretch, breathe, and gain flexibility. I' ve been practicing it for many years. However, the poses listed in the article are far too complicated for the novice, and if attempted without proper understanding and warm-up, could produce injury. Yoga can be tremendously beneficial if done with a qualified teacher—and, as with drumming, if the basics are learned first.

Dave Rodway

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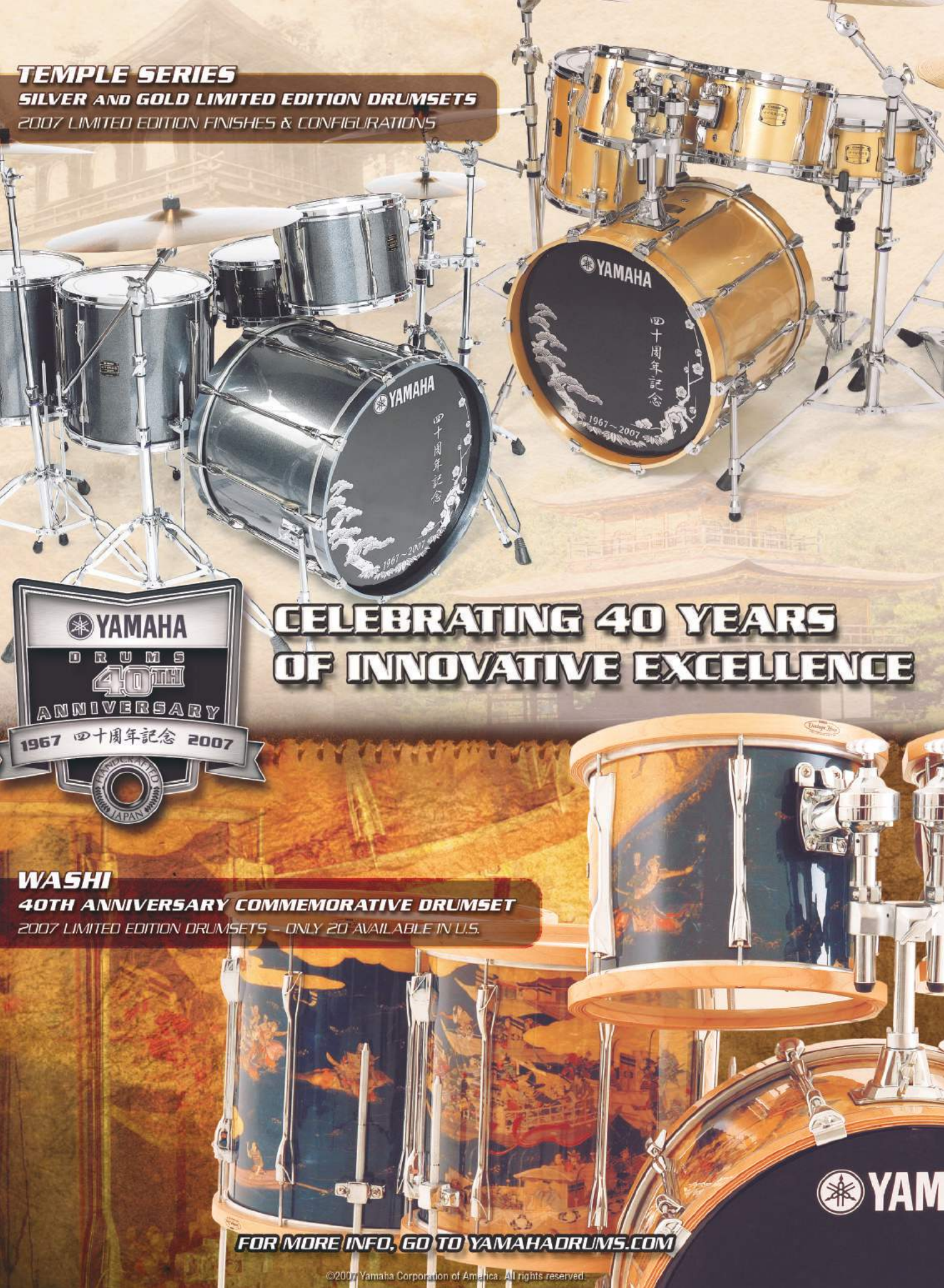

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Hearing Protection For A Singing Drummer

The Peltor Tactical 6S is representative of the best of the newer "active, level-dependant" earmuffs.

I'm losing high-frequency response in my left ear, so I'm thinking of trying the Peltor Tactical 6S earmuffs mentioned in Mark Parsons' January '07 *MD* article on hearing protection. However, I'm a singing drummer, so I need to hear my voice as well as the drums and other instruments. My band plays in bars and outdoor festivals, and I use a wedge monitor on my hi-hat side. Are the Peltor earmuffs good for vocal performances under these circumstances?

John C. Brown

Mark Parsons replies, "The Tactical 6S earmuffs (or any other active level-dependant earmuffs) will allow you to hear the vocals coming from a monitor, as long as the overall SPL is below the level where the muffs activate. Beyond that point, they become essentially just another pair of passive muffs. In other words, once any sound louder than approximately 80 dB hits the muffs, the mic/limiter/speaker protection system will clamp down temporarily. You'll be left with whatever level of passive protection the muffs provide (approximately 20–25 dB, depending on specific model), with no amplification.

"If you wish to continue using floor monitors, you'll need to find the level of passive protection that will reduce the damaging SPLs but allow you to hear the vocals in your monitor. Your best (although not cheapest) option may be custom-fit earplugs with replaceable filters of various NRR (noise reduction ratio) ratings. They'll not only allow you to vary the amount of protection to fit the situation, but will offer a more linear response than typical foam plugs do. (That means that things will sound pretty much 'normal,' but at a reduced volume.) Another option would be in-ear monitors or an isolation headphone, so that your monitor signal comes via a cable from a mixer rather than through the air from a speaker."

Rainbow Vistalite Kit

I recently came across a Ludwig Vistalite kit. I believe it's an early model because of the long curved bass drum spurs that retract inside the shell. There seem to be no scratches on the drums, and I couldn't find a single crack in any of the shells. The hardware is discolored by minor tarnishing, but this seems to be only superficial. I imagine that a decent cleaning and polishing job would make the rims, lug casings, and other metal parts immaculate.

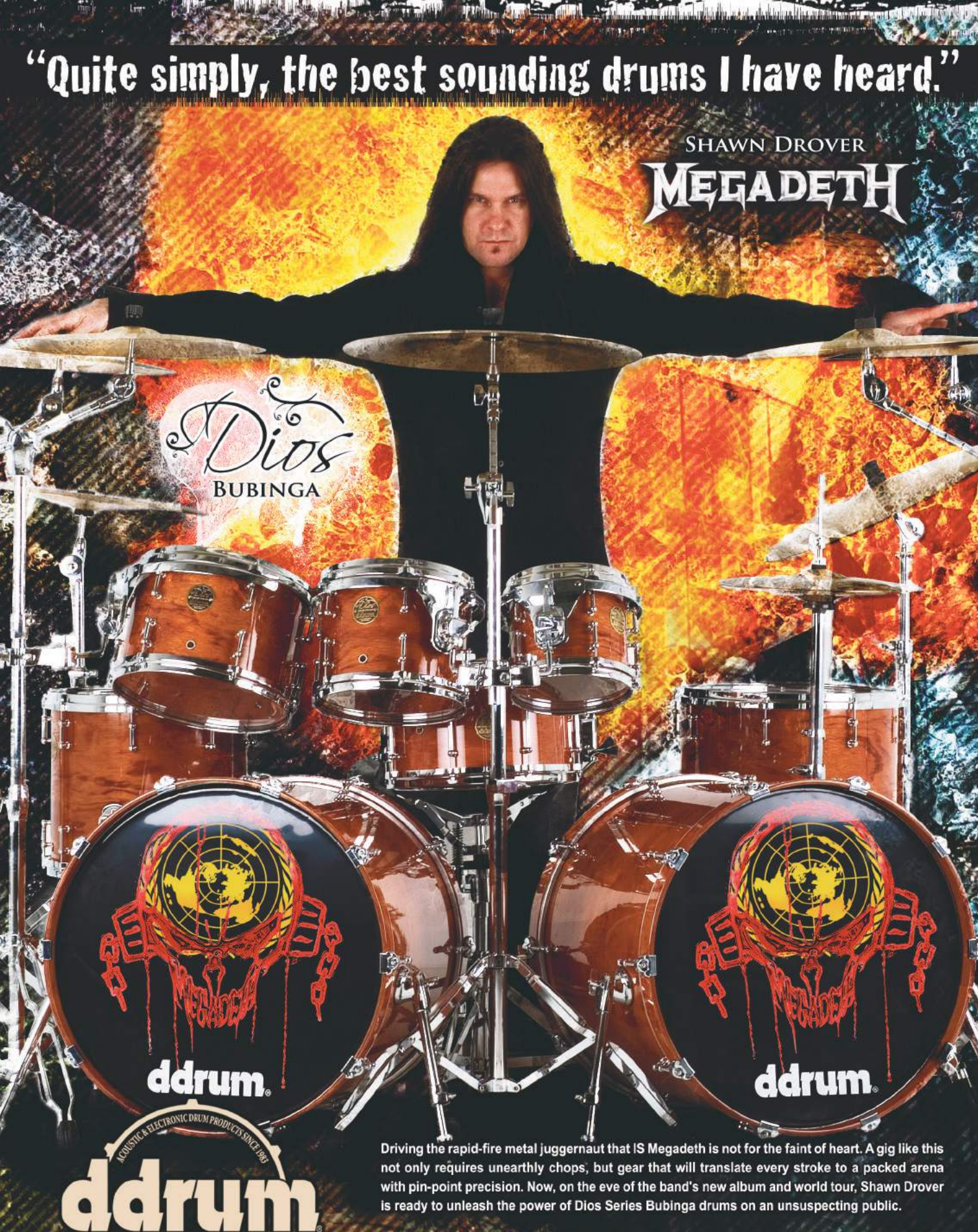
I know that Vistalites were huge in the '70s, and I also know that original kits in this condition are pretty rare. Could you please give me an idea of what this one might be worth?

Steve Barrow

MD drum historian Harry Cangany responds, "Your kit is a pre-1980 Rainbow Vistalite set in the Pro Beat configuration: a 14x24 bass drum, 9x13 and 10x14 rack toms, 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms, and a $5^1/_2$x14 matching snare drum. The snare drum helps us peg the date of the kit, because Ludwig pushed the Vistalite snare during the 1970s. By the early '80s, they offered the set with a metal Supraphonic snare.

"The set does appear to be extremely clean. It also features two hard-to-find colors: yellow and amber (Bonham's color).

Red is more common. Overall there were seven colors available to mix in order to create Rainbow shells. Swirl patterns were also available. I'd value the set, with its '70s narrow-arc spurs and double tom holder, at $3,000–$3,500 for its rarity and condition."



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Creating Written Music Files

I have a question about combining Finale music files with Microsoft Word documents. Over my years of playing I've gathered lots of information and exercises. I recently decided to put this material into a book for use with my students.

I used Microsoft Word to create the written text. I don't know how to format the musical exercises (which are written in Finale 2004) for import to a Microsoft Word file. Can you help me out?

Agnwstos X

In order to import music notation into Microsoft Word, you need to export each page of your Finale document as an EPS, TIFF, or PICT file. To do this, first open your Finale file and click on the Graphics tool. Then choose "Export Pages" under the Graphics menu. From there, choose the type of file you want to export, and then click "OK." The program will then ask you for a name and where to save the file. It will probably be handiest to save to the desktop.

Once you save the graphic, you're ready to import the image into Word. Open your Word document, go to the Insert menu, scroll down to "Picture," and choose "From File." Then find your music file, and select "Insert." Your music should now appear in your document. You can resize the image by clicking on it and dragging one of the corners in or out.

Taming A Washy Ride With Tape

I purchased a Dream 22" Bliss ride cymbal after reading T. Bruce Wittet's review in the December 2006 MD. I love the low fundamental tone of the cymbal, but I'd like to cut down on some of the underlying wash. In his review, Bruce said that he was able to effectively control the wash with a few pieces of tape, and I've heard of other drummers doing the same.

My questions are: 1) What kind of tape is recommended for this purpose? 2) Where should the pieces of tape be placed in order to best control the wash without completely deadening the cymbal's sound? 3) What size should the tape pieces be? 4) Is it better to use many small pieces or only a few big pieces? 5) What, if any, negative consequences could result from placing tape on my cymbal?

Jesse Judson

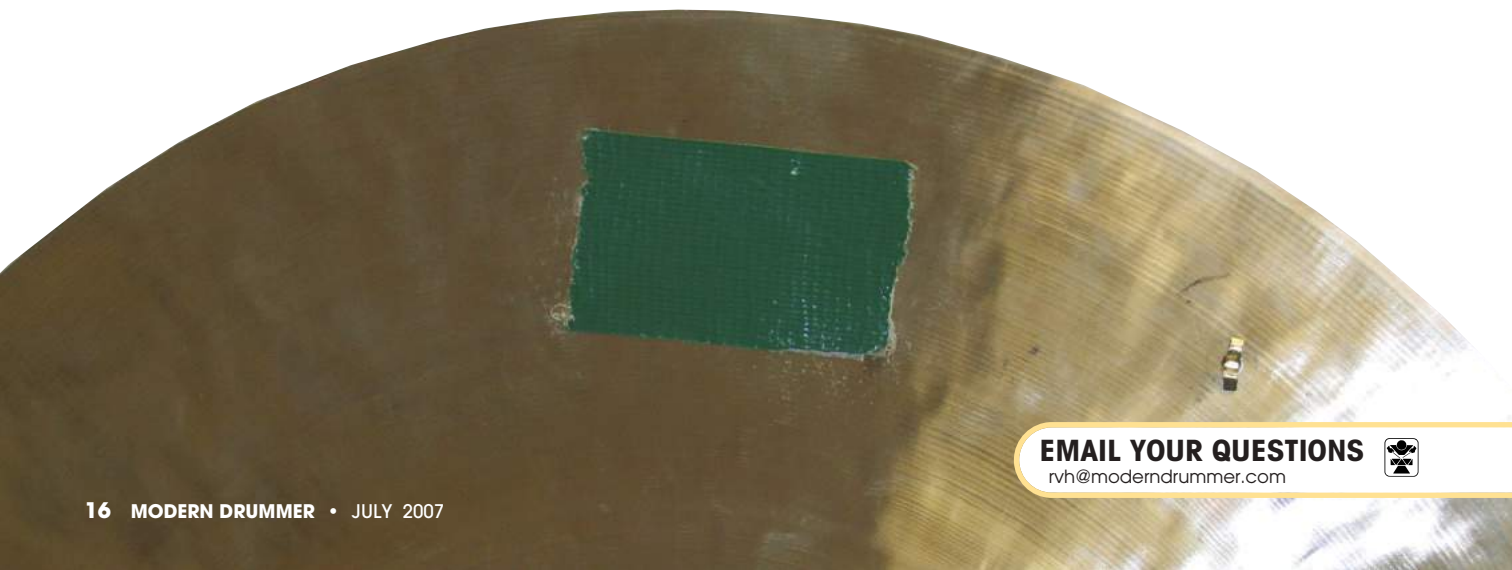
T. Bruce Wittet replies, "I recommend duct tape or theatrical 'gaffer's' tape, which is a fabric tape that can be reused. Local hardware stores stock different types of duct and cloth tapes in various colors, which work well. Don't use masking tape. It's too light to do the job and, if you forget it for a month, it's apt to bond permanently to the cymbal.

"I use a shiny green fabric-woven tape that's exactly 2" wide. Using your 22" Dream Bliss ride as an example, I'd use 4"-long strips on the underside, avoiding the bell area and the extreme edge. Because the edges of Bliss cymbals are extremely wobbly, however, I'd go closer to the edge than usual to slightly reduce the wobble—and, therefore, the wash. I'd place my first strip about 2" from the edge. If this doesn't control the wash enough, I'd place a second 4" strip on the underside of the opposite side of the cymbal, this time halfway between the edge and the bell. That should reduce wash considerably.

In order to control a cymbal that was heavier than a Bliss model (which tends to be on the lighter/thinner side), I might place another strip at 9:00 and, finally, one at 3:00. Some drummers recommend placing several shorter, narrower strips of tape equidistant on the underside.

Another way of going about this is to tap lightly on the cymbal and locate any areas emitting weird overtones. Simply place the tape on these areas, or on their underside counterparts. For years I worked for an engineer who insisted on close-miking hi-hats in the studio. He was always bugging me about the bell of the hats dominating, so he'd beg me to place a little strip on the top hi-hat bell. Although this worked to rid the cymbal of its overtones, I considered it "emasculating" the cymbal.

About the only negative consequence that can result from the use of tape on cymbals is sticky tape residue. Products like Goo Gone and WD-40 will remove such residue.



EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS
rvh@moderndrummer.com

HYPERDRIVE=SHORT TOMS

"My long time tech, Chris Achzet, and I wanted to do something new and innovative for a Christine Aquilera tour. Chris brought up the idea of cutting the shells down, and we decided to go extreme: 6x8", 6x10", and 6x12" mounted toms and 12x14" and 13x15" floor toms. It couldn't have turned out better. The shallow depths create tight, clear and controlled tones with less overtones and allow me to place the rack toms in lower and better positions."

brian FRASIER-MOORE
christina aguilera

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Virgil Donati

On The Elements Of Performance

Thanks for being an essential part of the drumming community. You continue to expand our art, and to provide us with knowledge through your books, clinics, DVDs, and performances. I have several questions, and I'd appreciate your being as specific and detailed as you can.

Regarding your single stroke–roll agility around the kit: Aside from the obvious practice, what steps should I follow for the development of such intense technique? Also, your ability to control dynamics so well at high speeds is very impressive. Assuming that most of your rolls up and down the toms are also single strokes, how did you develop so much finesse that when you play a softer dynamic, it sounds like you suddenly have brushes in your hands?

Please comment on your tuning, including whether you tune differently for specific recorded tracks. Finally, are there any other transcriptions of your recordings available besides the eight in your killer Ultimate Play-Along book?
Kurt Fairchild

Thanks for your generous comments. Your first two questions are quite related. We all listen to music (in this case, the music being a single-stroke roll around the drums) according to our separate capacities, and what's happening becomes clearer if we break it up into separate components. In this case you could look at these as 1) the mechanical plane, 2) the expressive plane, and 3) the performance plane.

I spent many years working on the mechanics of grip, hand position, types of strokes (hand, wrist, arm), and evenness of stick height, while always concerning myself with the esthetics of my execution, working on what seems like infinite bun-

Moving with agility around the drums, as well as the use of dynamics, is part of the "expressive" plane. Practicing at different stick heights, from half an inch to a full stroke, is important to help develop control over dynamics.

Another decisive factor is touch, which is perhaps best described as the artistry, characteristic, awareness, mastery, and effect of every stroke you initiate. It's the complete form and quality of your execution. It's difficult to put into words, and not an ingredient one can simply be taught. But you can see it in virtuoso performers, and you may feel it if you search for it long enough.

The third component, "performance," is the end result of the effort you place in the first two—but with the addition of inspiration, interaction with audience and bandmates, and an overwhelming energy of a kind that eludes you in the practice room, no matter how hard you try to simulate it.

I don't tune my drums to specific intervals, but rather to a pitch and note that speaks well on each particular drum. I also want to have room to accommodate the requirements of different tracks, as well as the producer's vision. I normally start out by tuning the top and bottom heads to the same pitch, and then I usually find myself cranking the resonant side a little more. That seems to deliver a controlled tone with sharp impact. But there are no hard and fast rules. You can visit my gear page at www.virgildonati.com for my most current setup and head preferences.

No more transcriptions are available at the moment. But it's highly possible that transcriptions of the drum parts from the forthcoming Planet X record, Quantum, will be available in the future.

HYPERDRIVE=ATTACK

"What I like best about shallow toms is the enhanced attack and volume. The attack is a lot quicker and sharper because the air doesn't have to travel as far. There's a better dynamic range with shallower toms that allows me to go from loud to soft immediately."

ronald BRUNER, JR.
stanley clarke/suicidal tendencies/
george duke/kenny garrett

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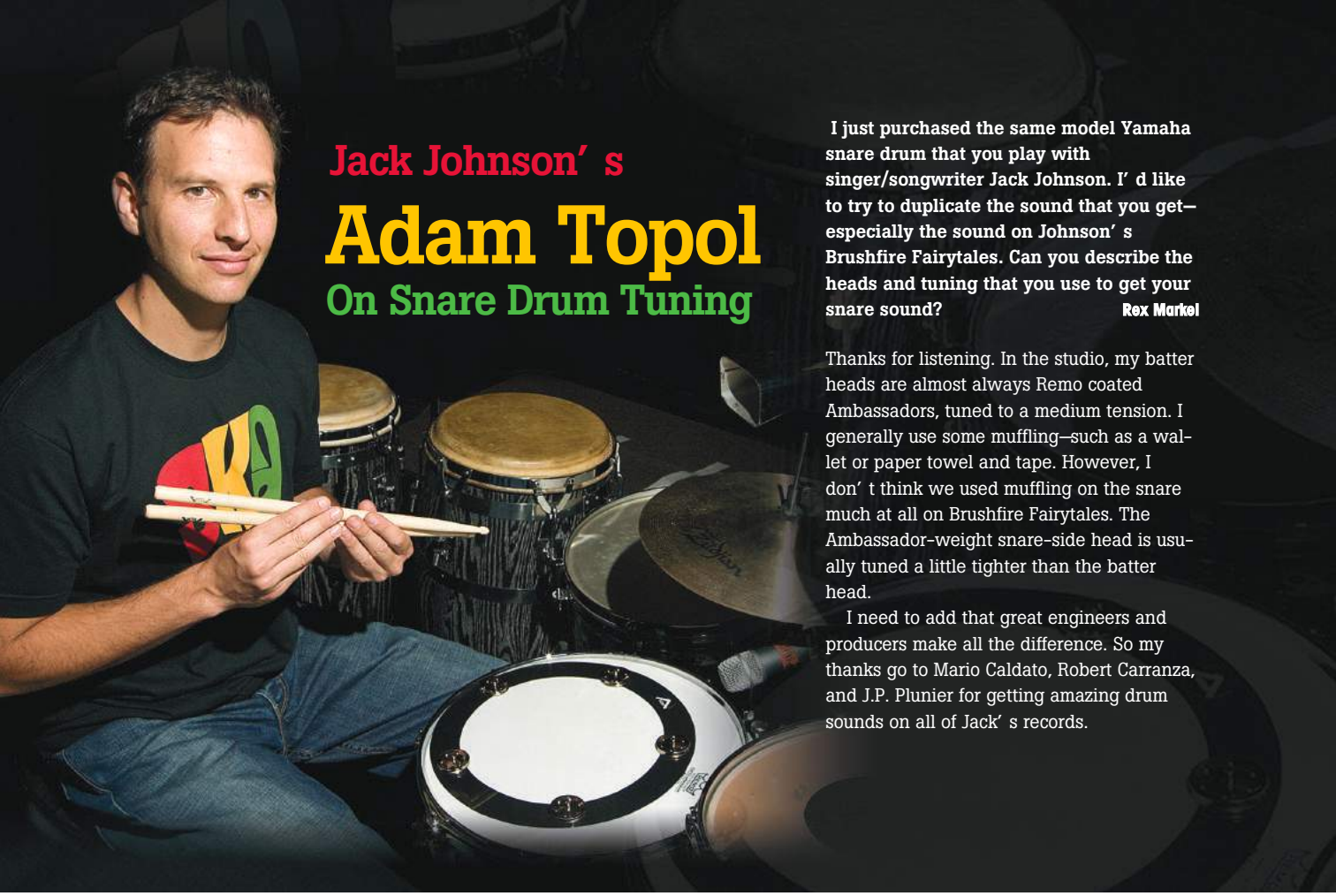


Jack Johnson's
Adam Topol
On Snare Drum Tuning

I just purchased the same model Yamaha snare drum that you play with singer/songwriter Jack Johnson. I'd like to try to duplicate the sound that you get—especially the sound on Johnson's Brushfire Fairytales. Can you describe the heads and tuning that you use to get your snare sound? **Rex Markel**

Thanks for listening. In the studio, my batter heads are almost always Remo coated Ambassadors, tuned to a medium tension. I generally use some muffling—such as a wallet or paper towel and tape. However, I don't think we used muffling on the snare much at all on Brushfire Fairytales. The Ambassador-weight snare-side head is usually tuned a little tighter than the batter head.

I need to add that great engineers and producers make all the difference. So my thanks go to Mario Caldato, Robert Carranza, and J.P. Plunier for getting amazing drum sounds on all of Jack's records.

Quick Beats

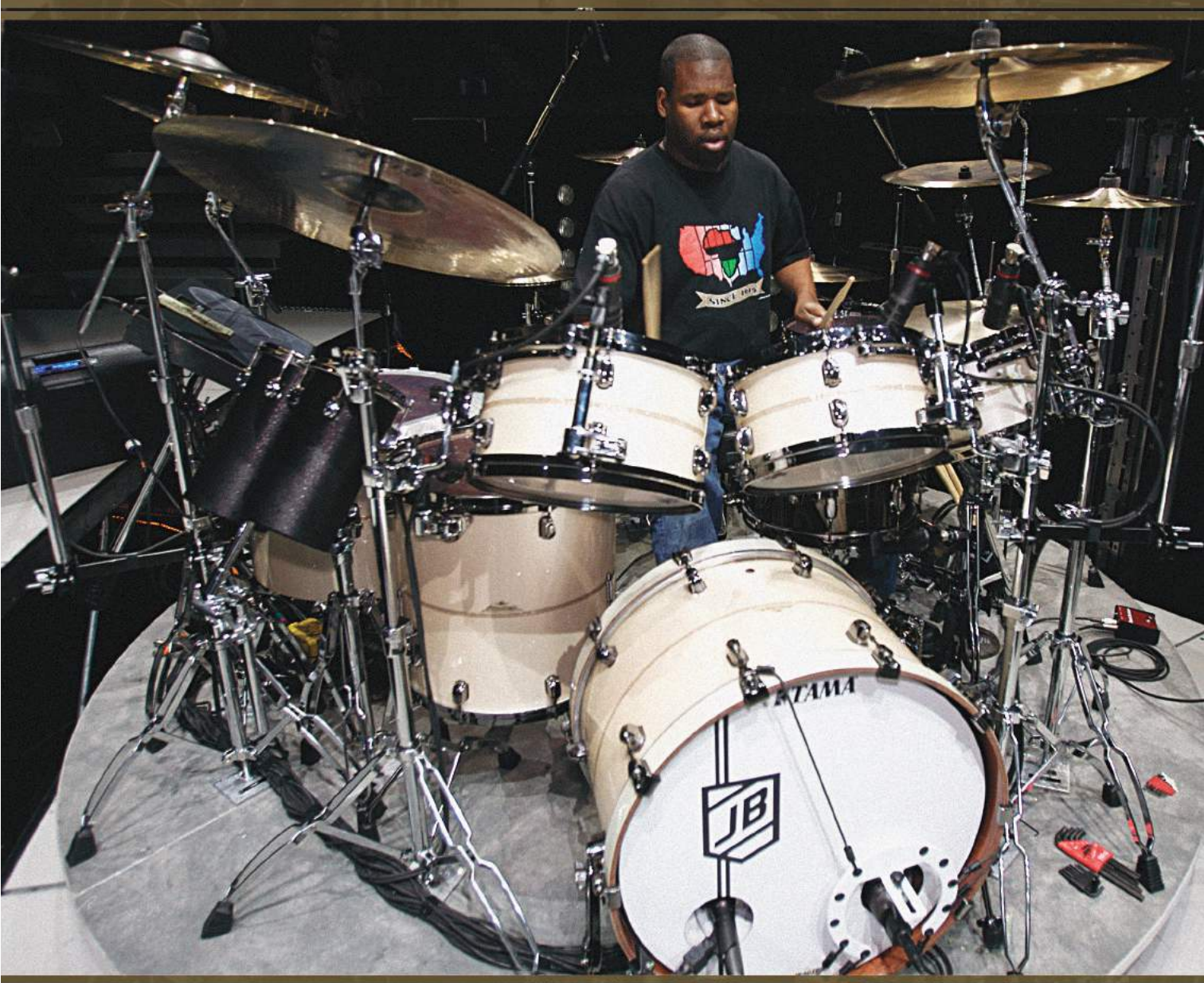
text and photo by Joe Perry

Primus' s
Tim Alexander

Place of birth: North Carolina
Influences: Neil Peart, John Bonham, Stewart Copeland
Hobbies/interests: Recording, studio work
How I relax: Sitting in the jacuzzi
Favorite food: Italian
Favorite junk food: Häagen Dazs ice cream
Favorite drink: Fruit smoothie
Favorite TV show: *The Office*
Favorite movie: *Dumb And Dumber*
Favorite album: All Bob Marley albums
Vehicle I drive: 1998 Chevy Suburban
Other instruments I play: Bass, guitar, and vocals
If I wasn't a drummer, I'd be: Working at a record store
Place I'd like to visit: Thailand
I wish I'd played drums on: "Kashmir" by Led Zeppelin
Most prized possession: A Buddha incense burner that I've had forever
Person I would like to talk to: Comedian Bill Hicks
Musician I'd like to work with: Peter Gabriel
Person I admire: My son Johannes
Most embarrassing moment on stage: Opening for Rush in 1994. On the last night, the crew duct-taped me to my drum throne, and I had to walk offstage still taped to it.
Most memorable performance: Halloween, 2003, in San Francisco. I had food poisoning.
Most unusual venue played: A club in Spain that had no ventilation and no air conditioning—and in which everyone was smoking
Biggest venue played: Woodstock 1994, in front of 250,000 people
Most unusual item autographed: Body parts

EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS
rvh@moderndrummer.com

HYPERDRIVE=PUNCH



"With shallow toms, you get a punch when you hit them that's straight to the point. The tone is up front and immediate, and the drums sing. Plus shallow toms give you greater total set-up flexibility because you can position the toms any way you want."

john BLACKWELL
justin timberlake

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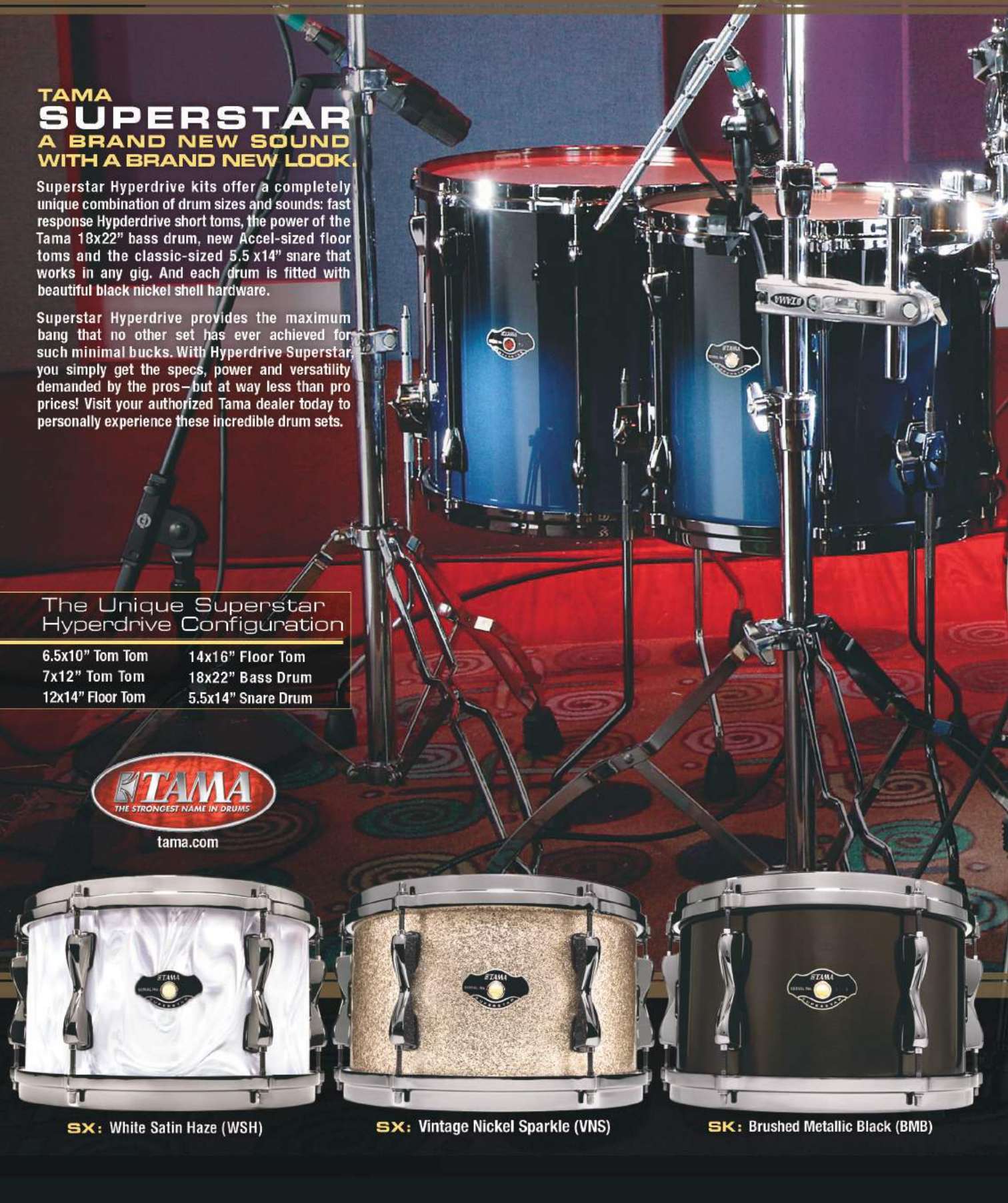
HYPERDRIVE=THE POWER, PUNCH



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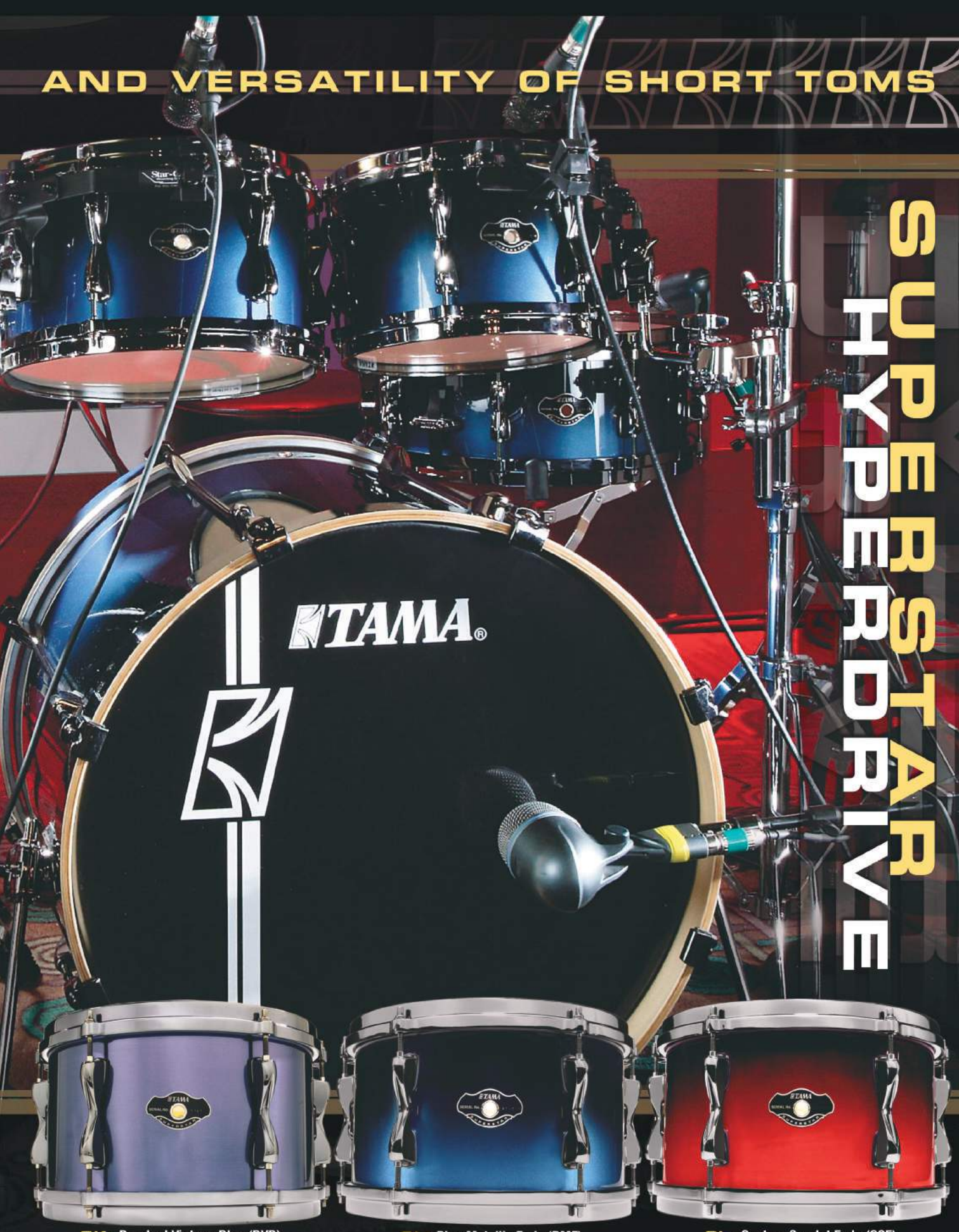
SX: White Satin Haze (WSH)

SX: Vintage Nickel Sparkle (VNS)

SK: Brushed Metallic Black (BMB)

AND VERSATILITY OF SHORT TOMS

SUPERSTAR HYPERDRIVE



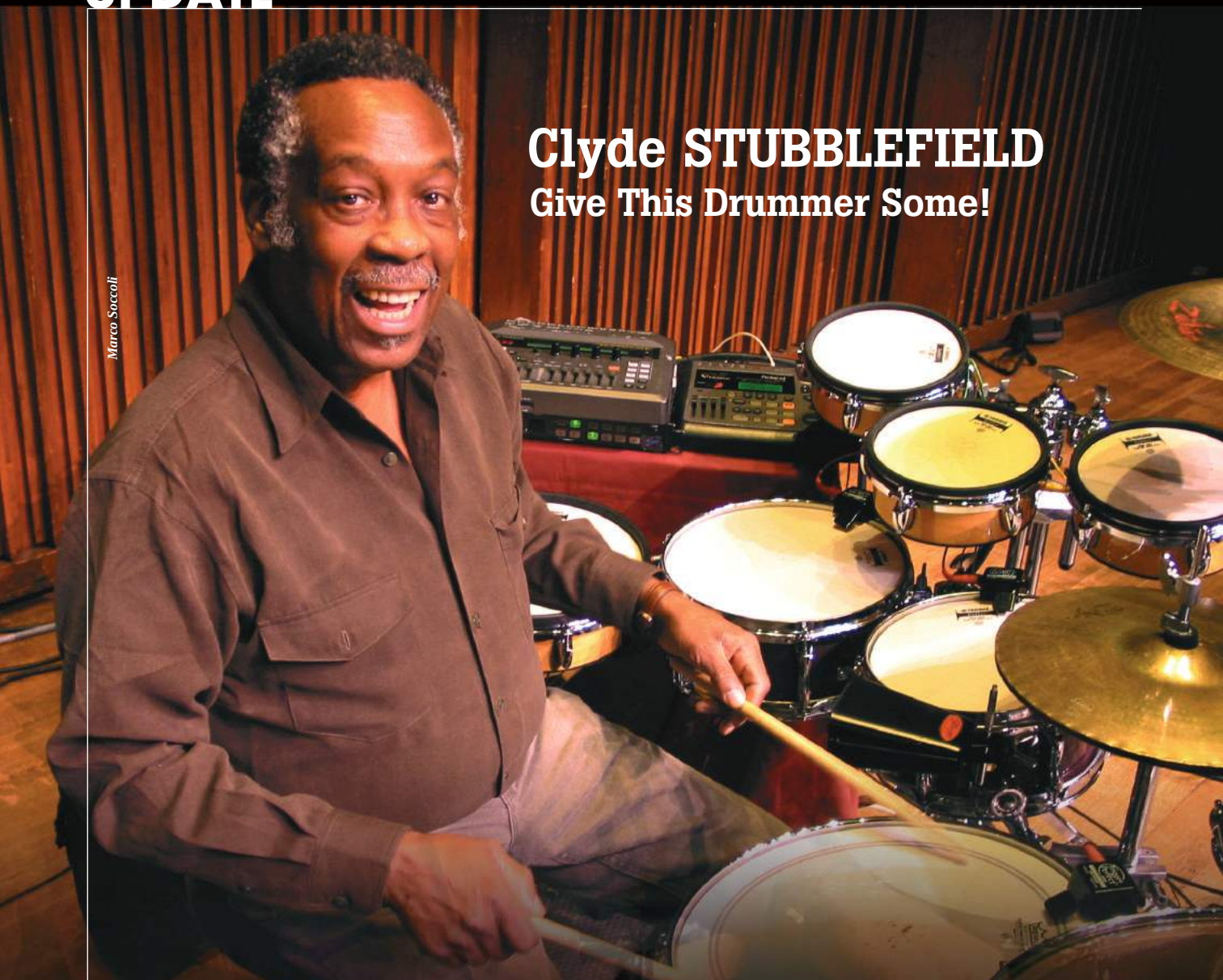
SK: Brushed Vintage Blue (BVB)

SL: Blue Metallic Fade (BMF)

SL: Custom Scarlet Fade (CSF)

Clyde STUBBLEFIELD

Give This Drummer Some!



Marco Soccoli

"When I first joined James Brown's band," recalls drum great Clyde Stubblefield, "there were five drumsets on stage. I was the *sixth*. But usually he only used three drummers at a time. After I joined, he got rid of three. Jabo [Starks] and I wanted to play more, so we had to find a way to get rid of that other guy! [laughs] It finally happened, and Jabo and I ended up being the only two drummers in the band."

Clyde is grateful for his time with the recently deceased music legend. According to the drummer, "The most important things I learned from working with James were how to show respect, how to put songs together and produce the music, how to put a group together and run a band, and how to get along and work with other musicians. He taught me *all* of that, and it's paid off over the years." (Please see the tribute to James Brown and his drummers on page 90).

Clyde currently plays on *Whad'Ya Know?*, a popular public radio show in Madison, Wisconsin hosted by Michael Feldman. He also plays in a Tex-Mex band called Cris Plata With Extra Hot. And, of course, Clyde and Jabo have their Funk Masters band and are currently working on their third CD. (Check out their Web site, www.JaboandClyde.com.)

All is not rosy with Stubblefield, though. At age sixty-three, one of the toughest "gigs" he's had to work through in recent years has been dealing with bladder cancer. Clyde had successful surgery and is said to be cancer free. But now he faces another physical challenge: chronic kidney disease. These unforeseen physical misfortunes have left the master of funk with some hefty medical expenses. With no medical insurance, Clyde is dealing with mounting bills.

A fund has been established in Clyde's name to help with these astronomic medical costs. Anyone interested in contributing, please send your donations to the address below, or visit www.Jaboand Clyde.com to make a donation online. For any drummer who has been inspired by Clyde's innovative drumming or has grown up listening to and learning from this true legend, this is one way to give back to someone who has given the drumming community so much.

Mike Haid

Send donations to:
Associated Bank
c/o Clyde Stubblefield Medical Fund
4141 Nakoosa Trail, Madison, WI 53714
Make checks payable to: Clyde Stubblefield Medical Fund

Kings Of Leon's Nathan FOLLOWILL

Southern Accents

Glen Rose

Even strapping young lads like Kings Of Leon drummer Nathan Followill aren't immune to the aches and pains of touring. It's par for the course when you're a grizzled road dog by your mid-twenties. "When your leg's cramping and there's a fast song coming up, you just have to psych yourself out," says the twenty-seven-year-old Followill. "That's what Josh Garza from Secret Machines taught me. Tell yourself, 'Screw it, I've got to get through this song.'"

Followill, the senior member of the familial (three brothers, one cousin) Southern-reared quartet, is certainly qualified to dispense such wisdom. He estimates Kings Of Leon have played nearly five hundred shows touring behind 2003's *Youth & Young Manhood* and 2005's *Aha Shake Heartbreak*—records that exceeded the hype spun by scribes fascinated with the band's painted-on bell-bottoms, bushy beards, and Dixie roots. "It's like they'd never seen pictures of Skynyrd before," laughs Followill.

Those discs were the sound of a wise-beyond-its-years band of hungry whippersnappers flying the flag for the greasy underbelly of '70s arena rock: early ZZ Top, Thin Lizzy, and Crazy Horse. While that trademark sound informs their new album, *Because Of The Times*, it doesn't define it. *Because* isn't the "difficult third album" bands often feel obligated to make. Rather, it's Kings Of Leon meeting every challenge it poses to itself, from the newfound funky swing of songs like "My Party," to the more daring arrangement arc of seven-minute opener "Knocked Up."

"That was a good one to start off with," Nathan figures, "because it lets people know it's probably not going to be the record you expected." On the track, Followill plays ghost notes on the snare while keeping straight time on the kick and hi-hat—a twist on the old chugging feel—and adds random snare thwacks for tension. "Its kind of like the old train beat," he explains, "but not in the traditional sense. The effect on the loud snare hits came about because someone accidentally left the echo chamber door open. I hit the drum once and it sounded like a shotgun going off. We were all like, 'Wow, that's a pretty good little accident there.'"

Patrick Berkery

Glen Rose

The Adolescents' Derek O'BRIEN

Punk Pioneer

Social Distortion, Agent Orange, D.I.—these are just some of the pivotal acts that helped shape the Southern California punk rock scene. And it's drummer Derek O'Brien who has manned the throne at some point in time over the past three decades for *each* of the aforementioned groups. But while he's credited as a punk drumming pioneer, O'Brien isn't about living in the past—well, not entirely.

O'Brien's current gig is with Orange County punk vets The Adolescents, playing songs from throughout the band's quarter-century existence. "When you're playing a set of material with songs that are that old," O'Brien says, "as well as songs that just came out last year, the trick is to make it sound like it's all current."

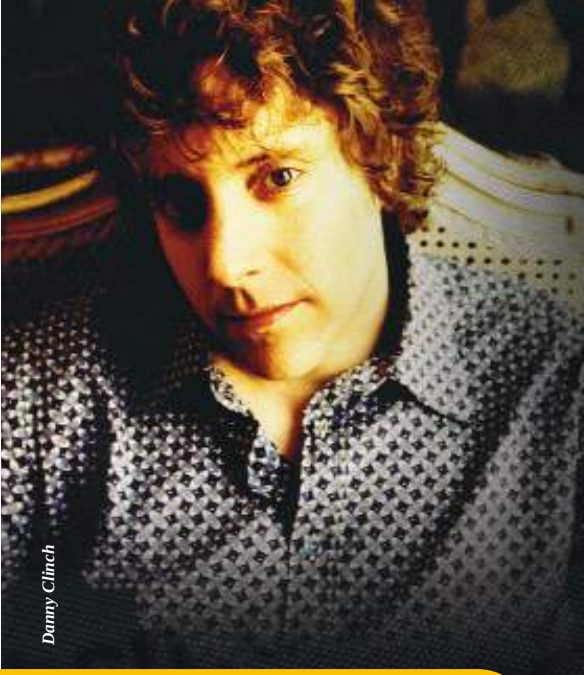
O.C. Confidential, the band's latest full-length, was recorded in 2005 at Derek's studio, D.O.B. Sound. Several years ago, O'Brien stepped away from the kit and began manning the mixing console as an engineer/producer. "It's nice to go from one to the other," he says. "It keeps it exciting."

O'Brien's time in the studio has even changed his perspective when he gets behind the kit. "I perceive what's going on differently," O'Brien says. "After working with so many drummers and getting under the magnifying glass of what's going on, I think about that with my own playing. Even if you're not into engineering, just paying attention in the studio and listening back to what everything sounds like as a listener, versus what it feels like when you're playing, makes a huge difference."

O'Brien's differences in gigs include drumming for Punk Rock Karaoke, which features genre long-timers Eric Melvin from NOFX, The Adolescents' Steve Soto, and Greg Hetson from Bad Religion. Though it's a fun gig, O'Brien says it can also be challenging. "Sometimes people will sing true to the song, but sometimes they'll go off on a completely different tangent," he says. "It's our job to keep it all together. You can't follow the singer; you've got to look at each other."

While on a break from Punk Rock Karaoke, O'Brien recently performed on a session for country-rock act Miss Derringer, which also featured another veteran punk drummer—Blondie's Clem Burke. "I really enjoy working with other drummers that I admire in the studio," he says. "That's always a blast."

Waleed Rashidi



Danny Clinch

Kasabian's
Ian MATTHEWS
Solid Background, Solid Player

When Ian Matthews got his first drumkit at age four, he was lucky that his babysitter was also a professional drummer. "He'd teach me a few rudiments and how to read a bit," Ian remembers. "That got me into jazz coordination and learning samba and mambo." By the time the drummer was seven, he could play "a pretty good waltz, quickstep, foxtrot, and tango." Matthews played his first gig at a local pub, sitting in for the drummer in his father's band. Four years later, a one-off performance in the orchestra pit at Bristol, England's 2,000-seat Hippodrome theater led to steady work playing in musical comedy productions and jazz shows throughout his teens.

Today Matthews reckons his diverse background made it easy for him to step into his gig with British rockers Kasabian, whose vibrant brand of rock mixes elements of new wave, electronica, and dub beats with classic progressive song structure. "There's a lot of flexibility to us," says Ian, "because there's no anchor to our music." Kasabian's sophomore release, *Empire*, debuted at number-1 on the British charts.

Primarily influenced by players like Buddy Rich, Mitch Mitchell, and Tony Williams, Ian also admires Zak Starkey, whom he befriended when Kasabian supported The Who and later toured with Oasis. To Ian's surprise, that friendship led to him giving Starkey his first ever lesson in rudiments. "Zak is a self-taught drummer who learned from listening to records," Matthews explains, "whereas I learned rudiments and what they can do when I was very young. At soundchecks, Zak would ask what I was doing at different times. I offered to teach him some warm-ups, and I took him through several exercises. He loved that!"

The two drummers had the chance to perform together when Kasabian played with the BBC concert orchestra in 2006. "There wasn't a split hair between our snare beats," Ian says. "It was amazing! Zak's taught me a lot about feel and the way he grooves, whether it's with Oasis—which is much more laid back—or flying around the kit with The Who. The feeling of admiration is very mutual."

Gail Worley

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- **Louie Bellson** (jazz legend): 7/6/24
- **Joe Morello** (jazz giant): 7/17/28
- **Rashied Ali** (free-jazz great): 7/1/35
- **Ringo Starr** (The Beatles): 7/7/40
- **Denny Seiwell** (Wings): 7/10/43
- **Butch Miles** (Count Basie Band): 7/4/44
- **Jai Johanny "Jaimoe" Johanson** (The Allman Brothers): 7/8/44
- **Dino Danelli** (The Rascals): 7/23/45
- **Mitch Mitchell** (Jimi Hendrix): 7/9/47
- **Don Henley** (The Eagles): 7/22/47
- **Michael Shrieve** (Santana): 7/6/49
- **Roger Taylor** (Queen): 7/26/49
- **Simon Kirke** (Free, Bad Company): 7/28/49
- **Andy Newmark** (studio great): 7/14/50
- **Tris Imboden** (Chicago): 7/27/51
- **Leon "Ndugu" Chancler** (R&B great): 7/1/52
- **Stewart Copeland** (The Police): 7/16/52
- **Marky Ramone** (The Ramones): 7/15/56
- **Chet McCracken** (Doobie Brothers): 7/17/52
- **Bobby Previte** (jazz independent): 7/16/57
- **Bruce Crump** (Molly Hatchet): 7/17/57
- **Nigel Twist** (The Alarm): 7/18/58
- **Bill Berry** (R.E.M.): 7/31/58
- **Jack Irons** (Red Hot Chili Peppers, solo): 7/18/62
- **Evelyn Glennie** (percussion great): 7/19/65
- **Jason Bonham** (Foreigner): 7/15/66
- **Brad Hargreaves** (Third Eye Blind): 7/30/72
- **Will Champion** (Coldplay): 7/31/77

Chuck TILLEY
Shining Bright On Nashville Star

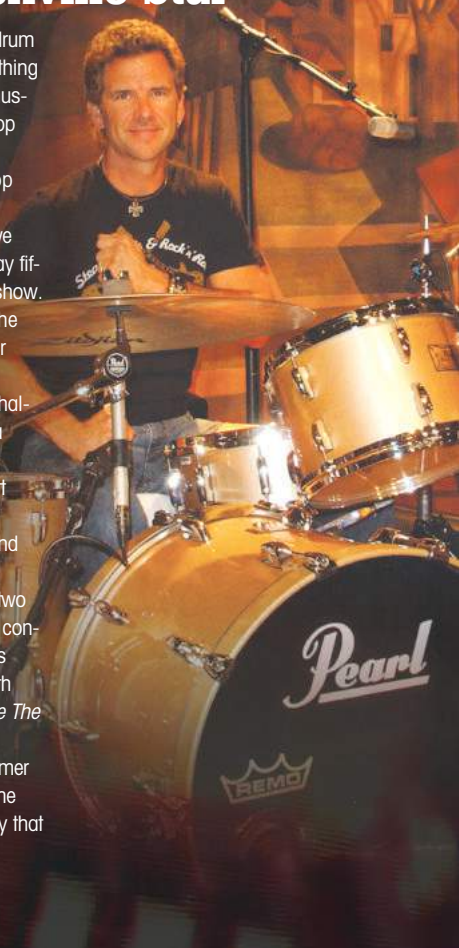
Chuck Tilley is thrilled these days to be occupying the drum seat for popular TV show *Nashville Star*. "The coolest thing about the gig is that it covers every musical style," he enthuses, "from hard rock and blues to traditional country and pop ballads. One week we're doing hard rock with Brett Michaels of Poison, and then the next we're doing a pop ballad with Kenny Rogers."

Tilley does a lot of playing on the show. "Not only do we back up the guest artists every week," he explains, "we play fifteen or twenty other pieces of music within the hour-long show. *And* we do all the musical bumps going in and out of the commercials. In that way it's similar to the Letterman or Leno bands."

The contestants who appear on the show also lend a challenge. "In any given show," Tilley says, "you might have a contestant do a rockabilly tune, another doing a Les Paul swing number, and another singing more of a Bonnie Raitt contemporary blues thing. But that's what's fun about the show. We never know what's going to get thrown at us, and there's no tape delay. It's *live*."

While the show is in production, the house band does two half days of rehearsals per week and one full day with the contestants. Then, of course, comes show day. But Tilley finds time to do other things. In 2004 and 2005, he worked with Dolly Parton, doing background vocals on her *Those Were The Days* album as well as touring with her during a break in *Nashville Star*'s schedule. Tilly has also toured in the summer months with the *Nashville Star* winners, and he spends time with his own band, Sixwire. According to Chuck, "I'm lucky that I have a good balance of touring and recording."

Robyn Flans



UPDATE NEWS

Andrew Lepley

Mike Mangini recently recorded the drum tracks for the latest Annihilator CD, *Metal*. (Mike will not be touring with the band.)

Jim Keltner and **Joachim Cooder** play drums and percussion on Ry Cooder's *My Name Is Buddy*.

David Wright is on The Exies' new record, *A Modern Way Of Living With The Truth*.

Derek Roddy has been named as the new drummer in Today Is The Day.

Justin Sandler is on Tattooed Millionaires' new album, *Armed & Hammered*.

Veteran Broadway drummer **Larry Lelli** has joined the Brooklyn-based indie rock band Holding Back Entirely, which also features drummer-turned-frontman Nikolaus Schuhbeck on lead vocals and guitar. For more info check out www.holdingbackentirely.com.

Congratulations to drummer **Ellade Bandini**, who recently won the Italian Grammy "Premio Tenco" award. Ellade is the first player to have won this award, which is usually dedicated to songwriters.

Joe Tomino is on the new Dub Trio release.

Chris Fryar is currently working with bassist extraordinaire Oteil Burbridge.

Dave McClain can be seen on Machine Head's e-card, which features a selection of songs from the CD *The Blackening*. Check out www.roadrunnerrecords.com/TheBlackening/.

Paul La Raia

Steve DiStanislao has been recording with David Gilmour. He'll also be playing selected upcoming shows with Kenny Loggins to support his new release, *How About Now*. And Steve will be touring with David Crosby and Graham Nash later this year.

Chris Johnson is on tour with Stevie Wonder.

Charlie Z recently toured Japan with Jordan Rudess, keyboardist of Dream Theater.

Brett Stowers is on Fair To Midland's *Fables From A Mayfly*.

Kevin Soffera is on Doren's debut CD, *Twisted Garden*.

Permanent Me's debut, *After The Room Clears*, features drummer **Mike Fleischmann**.

Patti Smith's *Twelve* features long-time drummer **Jay Dee Daugherty**.

The re-formed Dinosaur Jr. has released their first DVD, *Live From The Middle East*, featuring, as usual, drummer **Murph**.

Son Volt's latest, *The Search*, features **Dave Bryson** on drums.

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

- **Philly Joe Jones** was born on 7/15/23, **Alan Dawson** on 7/14/29, and **Eric Carr** on 7/12/50.
- On 7/12/76, **Roy Haynes** records *Vistalite* with tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson.
- On 7/21/83, The Police (with **Stewart Copeland**) have the number-one single with "Every Breath You Take."
- In July of 1998, **Ringo Starr** is voted into the *Modern Drummer* readers poll hall of fame.

Original White Zombie drummer **Ivan DePrume** has joined up with former Rob Zombie guitarist Riggs in the band Scum Of The Earth. Their CD is titled *Sleaze Freak*

Bobby Rae appears on *Dept. Of Good And Evil Featuring Rachel Z*.

Christopher J. Guglielmo is on Bayside's *The Walking Wounded*.

Australia's **Adam Church** plays drums and everything else on his debut CD, *Sum Of All Parts*. For more info check out www.adamchurch.com.

Bryan Hitt is on Reo Speedwagon's latest CD, *Everyone Loves A Happy Ending*. The disc was produced by Joe Vannelli and is the band's first studio recording in more than a decade.

Hiromi's new one, *Time Control*, features **Martin Valihora.**

Scott Metko is on Adam Fears' *You Get Me* and Davey T. Hamilton's *Starting Today***.**

MD is happy to announce the arrival of Yamaha artist relations director **Joe Testa**'s twin baby girls, Rubette Sandra and Juliet Carmella. Congratulations to Joe and his lovely wife, Kim.

MD RADIO

To hear some of the artists mentioned in this month's *Update*, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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by Paul Bielewicz

KEY NOTES

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- Various drum-size configurations available
- Limited lifetime warranty

At the 2007 National Association of Music Manufacturers (NAMM) show this past January, Pearl introduced their totally new Vision series with the tagline "Next Level Perfection." Released in two trim lines—the VSX (covered birch/basswood shells) and the VLX (lacquered 100% birch shells)—the Vision series essentially replaces Pearl's venerable entry-level Export line.

Although it's priced lower, the Vision series utilizes some of the high-end features from Pearl's Reference and Masterworks series. These include ISS suspension tom mounts, "SST" (Superior Shell Technology) shell construction, and 6/8 graduated shell/ply ratios. This means that rack toms utilize 6-ply shells, while floor toms and bass drums feature 8-ply shells. This ply differential is designed to achieve a balance between volume, pitch, and projection, and to sonically match the smaller and larger shell diameters. The overall concept is "to optimize each component of the kit to respond with perfect articulation in its respective frequency range."

The Review Package

Our review kit consisted of a Vision VSX birch/basswood kit, in Gun Metal Sparkle wrap, in the 925C configuration. The drums included an 18x22 bass drum, 9x12 and 10x13 rack toms, a 16x16 floor tom, and a $5^1/_2$x14 SensiTone steel snare. Also included was a set of stands from the new 900 series, which was designed specifically to accompany Vision kits.

Drums

One of the advantages of doing years of sound research—as Pearl has done over the past two decades—is that the lessons learned can be applied to any level of drums, not just to the highest end. This is easily demonstrated with the VSX drums. Their sound is warm and rich with the nice low-end afforded by the basswood, yet with the focused attack of birch. They' re easy to tune, which should benefit the student drummer, and despite their elegant finishes, they' re durable enough for the gigging drummer.

Our review kit was shipped with each drum individually packaged. Their sound was deep, rich, and resonant, with relatively few high-end overtones. After trying different tunings, I found what I felt was their best sound: a medium-low tuning on the batter heads and a medium tuning on the resonant heads.

The easiest way to describe the sound of the Vision bass drum is " big." As with the other drums, it was shipped complete and pre-tuned. Pearl' s Perimeter EQ heads were used as batter and resonant, offering a slight amount of built-in muffling. Additional muffling would probably be necessary, depending on your own preferences. In our tests, the addition of a small pillow significantly reduced the overtones without any adverse effects on volume.

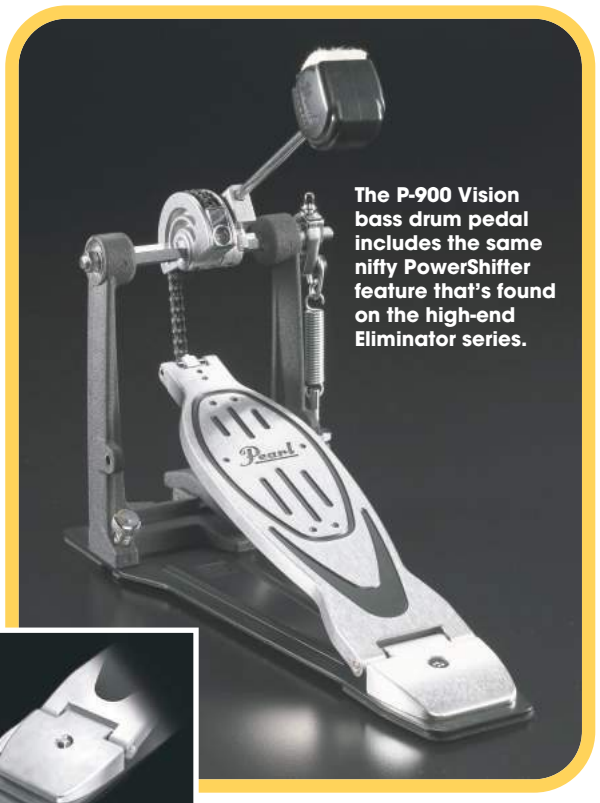
The SensiTone snare is a major step up from the generic steel snares found on some entry-level kits, and it' s a good complement to the warm, rich sound of the bass drum and toms. I was pleasantly surprised by its amiable character, sensitivity, and dynamic range. It didn' t possess as much of the " metal" overtone one might expect from a steel snare, yet it still had reasonable volume and cut when hit hard. It also showed tasteful restraint and good snare response when hit softly. A particularly interesting functional feature of the snare was its SR-900 Dual-Motion strainer, so named because it can be converted from side-lever action to Gladstone-type front-lever action as desired.

All of the drums feature Pearl' s " bridge-style" lugs, which are adapted from the Reference line. These lugs have an open area in

Toms are suspended using the same ISS suspension system used on Masters and Reference series kits.

The Vision kit comes with Pearl's excellent SensiTone steel snare drum.

The totally new 900 hardware line was developed to accompany Vision kits.



the middle, which reduces shell contact and promotes greater resonance and sustain. This design is carried throughout the kit, including on the bass drum/tom mounting bracket and the floor-tom leg brackets. A similar design is even used for the air-suspension floor-tom feet.

Hardware

The Vision hardware package included a BC-900 convertible boom/cymbal stand, a C-900 cymbal stand, an S-900 snare stand, and an H-900 hi-hat stand. These double-braced stands are heavy-duty, but they' re not too heavy—a bonus for young student drummers and weekend giggers alike.

The package also included a P-900 single bass drum pedal, which features Pearl' s exclusive Power Shifter function. That function permits the footboard to be moved between three different positions—which, in turn, instantaneously alters the footboard action from light, to medium, to strong. It' s a nifty feature borrowed from Pearl' s high-end Eliminator line, and it' s great to see it on an entry-level kit.

The cymbal stands and the snare-basket adjustment feature infinitely-adjustable tilters—a nice improvement over ratchet tilters. All stand legs feature a wide span for stability, and are fitted with large heavy-duty feet. Fit and finish is enhanced by ergonomic thumbscrews and very smooth telescoping adjustments provided by nylon inserts.

The boom cymbal stand features a disappearing telescopic arm, which is convenient when using the boom stand as a straight stand, as well as for ease of portability. It should be noted, however, that some kits in this price range offer two boom stands, as

Five wraps are available in the VSX series. Four lacquer finishes are offered on VLX kits.

opposed to the single boom and single straight stand offered with the 900 series.

Additional Features

The Vision series offers some niceties that aren' t often found on kits in its price range. Among these are double-ply ProTone heads, suspension-style tom mounts, die-cast bass drum claws with rubber linings to protect the finish on the bass drum hoops, and infinitely adjustable tom arms for fine tom angles and placement.

Finally, one of the single most impressive features offered on the Vision series is a limited lifetime warranty. Considering that the Vision line replaces the Export series—long revered as a target by young bashers—that' s a pretty good indication of Pearl' s confidence in the quality of the new line.

Conclusion

Simply put, the Vision VSX is a great-sounding drumset and a great value for the price. It offers many advanced sonic and ergonomic features designed with the benefit of Pearl' s years of focused drum research. Manufacturing in mainland China facilitates a low price, but quality is not sacrificed. This cannot be better illustrated than by the kit' s limited lifetime warranty.

With beautiful finishes and a warm, rich sound well-suited to many playing situations, Pearl' s Vision VSX series is a winner.

THE NUMBERS

Vision VSX 925/C **$1,399**

Includes 9x12 and 10x13 rack toms, a 16x16 floor tom, an 18x22 bass drum, a $5\frac{1}{2}$x14 SensiTone steel snare drum, and a 900 series hardware package. Three other kit configurations are available, as are individual add-on drums. Kits are offered in five different covered finishes. VLX all-birch kits are offered in the same configurations, in four high-gloss lacquered finishes, at $1,499.

(615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com

SNARE DRUM OF THE MONTH

by Michael Dawson

Black hardware, unique lugs, and silver sparkle wrap give this drum a lot of visual vibe.

8"-deep shell may require a specialty snare stand if you prefer low positions.

To hear this drum, log on to www.moderndrummer.com. MP3

HOW'S IT SOUND?

This monstrous snare from Pork Pie is surprisingly versatile, especially given its extra-deep 8" shell. Its tone is very warm and musical, even when tuned very tight. It has a wide tuning range, with several sweet spots along the way. With the batter head completely slack (and with some muffling), I found an amazing fatback sound that required zero EQ in the studio. Then when I took the batter head up to drum corps–type levels, it really popped without sounding thin.

For more all-purpose situations, the Little Squealer performed best when tuned just below the point where the batter head starts to choke. At this setting, the 8-ply maple shell sings, while the 8"-depth adds extra body to each stroke. Just be sure to play the drum as close to the center as possible. Any off-center hits let out a lot of pitchy overtones that you may not want, especially if the drum isn't perfectly in tune with the song. Of course, you can alleviate this by throwing on a Zero Ring or other muffling devices.

The 8x14 Little Squealer is also remarkably sensitive. Because of its size, I expected a slight delay from the snares. But as long as you play it within the inner ten inches of the head, you'll have no problem achieving a crisp, snappy sound at all dynamic levels. I even enjoyed how well this drum responded when played with brushes.

WHAT'S IT COST? $630 www.porkpiedrums.com

Meinl Byzance Jazz Cymbals

>> A Bit Of Darkness In An Otherwise Bright World

by Rick Van Horn

KEY NOTES

- Wide range of tonal character among rides
- 20" flat ride sounds somewhat dull
- Exceptional trio of 18" crashes

Meinl's new Byzance Jazz series was developed in collaboration with Wolfgang Hafner, a German studio and touring drummer with over 350 albums to his credit, including eleven under his own name. "We were looking to create a jazzy cymbal line with a warm sound and a great touch," says Hafner, who's worked with a serious number of international jazz and pop stars. "The cymbals have very good definition and fit in a lot of different musical situations—such as jazz, big band, pop, blues, and R&B—whether live or in the studio."

Okay, so we have a "jazzy" line (as its name implies), but not necessarily a line created exclusively for jazz playing. Let's examine the range, from the bottom to the top.

All of the Byzance Jazz cymbals sounded best when played gently and/or with small sticks. Still, a few could be wailed on to good effect.

Large, deep hammering marks distinguish most of the Byzance Jazz ride models, as well as the hi-hats.

22" Rides

Can you say "pang"? If so, you'll understand the 22" China ride. To begin with, it features a distinctive heavy hammering pattern. Add to that its large diameter, thin weight, wide upturned flange, and four rivets, and you have a big, dark, washy cymbal with a trashy sound and lots of spread. When played gently with a small stick, the China ride offers character with control. Hit it harder with a larger stick, and watch out!

The 22" extra-thin ride is very thin by modern standards. (I could easily flex it by hand.) This gives it a wobbly, washy character and a dark, low-pitched sound. It, too, gave great response and clarity when played with a small stick. A heavier stick and/or harder playing built up quite a roar. The moderate-sized bell didn't offer much in the way of playability.

The 22" thin featured more pronounced hammer marks, and its edge was not as wobbly as the extra-thin cymbal's. This resulted in less spread and a more solid stick response. The bell was more playable, too. Interestingly, while cymbals usually get higher-pitched as they get heavier, the 22" thin was lower than its extra-thin sibling. This lower pitch contributed some gonginess to the build-up that occurred under heavy playing (but that didn't occur at lower impact). Like the other 22" rides we tried (we didn't get the medium-thin model), this cymbal didn't offer a particularly good crash sound.

20" Rides

The 20" thin ride (we didn't get an extra-thin) is smaller, a little brighter (though still low-pitched), and generally more responsive than any of the 22s. And even at its thin weight, its edge wasn't particularly wobbly. So although it generated a nice, full spread, it didn't build up any roar. The bell was playable, and it helped to give the cymbal a nice crashability.

The 20" medium-thin had a better bell, and was—somewhat oddly again—lower-pitched than the thin model. (Although it wasn't in the basement as far as overall tonality.) Its heavier weight made for more sustain, but sticking patterns were never obscured. Crashability would be a question of appropriate volume for the situation; it didn't really open up at low to moderate impact.

The 20" Light Sweet and Sweet rides address the fact that not all jazz is about ultra-low, dark, trashy cymbal sounds. The Sweet rides feature tight lathing and a smaller, tighter hammering pattern than that used on the other Jazz rides. Accordingly, they cover the brighter, more penetrating sound of the

spectrum, without getting brash or aggressive about it, and without actually getting up into "high" pitch ranges.

The Sweet Light ride, by virtue of its thin design, offers excellent crashability. However, this characteristic contributes to a washy spread that can obscure sticking patterns at higher volume levels. Its bell is playable if not remarkable. The Sweet ride, which is a little heavier, has a better bell, not so much spread, and less low-volume crashability. Many might see this model as the most familiar-sounding or "general-purpose" of the Byzance Jazz series.

The 20" flat ride has the same tight hammering as the Sweets. Although its weight is not indicated, it felt heavier and more rigid than the medium-thin models, with no flex at all. Obviously it has no bell, so it has virtually no sustain and no spread. It offered different pitches depending on where it was struck (edge, shoulder, or near center), but in all cases what you mainly hear is the click of the stick on the metal, with a moderate hum beneath it. Some might call this "subtle" or "subdued." Others, frankly, might call it dull.

The 20" Club ride is also flat and fairly heavy. But it has the same large, deep hammer marks as the darker-sounding rides, and it's also fitted with four rivets. It produces more pronounced differences in sound and response between the center (higher-pitched) and the edge (low, with the hiss of the rivets). So it doesn't create a lot more sound than the regular flat ride does, but it definitely has more character.

The Club ride combines a flat-ride design with heavy hammering, and adds rivets.

Smaller, tighter hammering is used for the Sweet rides, the flat ride, and all crashes.

18" Crashes

You'd be hard-pressed to find a better-matched trio of crashes. They all feature the tight hammering of the Sweet rides, and they share the same sweet, moderately bright tonality. In fact, their general sonic character is identical but for pitch, which goes up as the cymbals get heavier. The extra-thin, thin, and medium-thin weight/thickness designations are all accurate by today's standards. So they all had moderate to excellent low-volume response, with the nod, predictably, going to the extra-thin model. Conversely, the thin and medium-thin models could be ridden on, and could serve double-duty in a minimalistic setup—especially opposite one of the larger, darker-sounding Byzance Jazz rides.

14" Thin Hats

The hats were the biggest surprise in our test group. Although they're called thin hats, the bottom cymbal is significantly thicker and more rigid than the top, and it also features a rawer, less heavily lathed surface. The top cymbal is thin and flexible, as well as being fully lathed and polished.

While the thin hats may not be the most delicate and "jazzy" pair I've heard, the thin top provides wonderful stick response for jazz patterns, as well as a breathy open/closed "bark" that was never overpowering, even at high volume. The heavier bottom cymbal helps produce a solid chick sound that might be a bit loud for extremely low-volume acoustic situations, but would be great for most everything else.

Conclusion

Purists who use ultra-dark, ultra-trashy sixty-year-old Turkish cymbals as their point of reference probably won't consider any of the Byzance Jazz models worthy of their designation. But in today's world of heavier, louder, brighter, and more penetrating cymbals, the Byzance Jazz models definitely offer a jazz sensibility. Better yet, they'd be cool for a lot of other musical styles, too.

THE NUMBERS

14" thin hats	$548
18" extra-thin, thin, and medium-thin crashes	$424
20" Sweet Light, Sweet, extra-thin, thin, medium-thin, flat, and Club rides	$490
22" extra-thin, thin, medium-thin, and China rides	$599

(615) 227-5090, www.meinlcymbals.com

Quick Looks

REMO POWERSONIC BASS DRUM BATTER

by Rick Van Horn

Remo's new 2-ply PowerSonic bass drum batter features two permanently installed 3/4"-wide foam dampening rings for low-end enhancement and overall resonance control. Added to these is the External Snap-on Dampening System (ESDS), a specially designed pad that can be attached or removed instantly.

We tried a clear version of the head on a classic 14x22 Slingerland bass drum, in four different configurations:

1) With a solid 1-ply front head (slightly muffled by a felt strip, but with nothing in the drum) and without the ESDS pad. Result: The drum produced a big, fat, boom that cut off a few milliseconds after beater impact, with no lingering sustain. A great acoustic sound.

2) With the ESDS pad installed. Result: We got a tighter, punchier sound with a very short sustain. But the drum was by no means "dead." This was a good compromise between classic live and studio sounds.

3) With a ported, unmuffled front head, and without the ESDS pad. Result: The sound was similar to what we got with the solid front head, but with much shorter sustain and more punch. The drum had bigness without boominess—great for live miking situations.

4) With the ESDS pad. Result: Sustain was reduced to almost nil. (A *totally* dead sound could be achieved by muffling the front head slightly with a felt strip.) We still got a powerful initial *thump,* with more prominent attack. Impressive for a drum with nothing in it, and very applicable for studio recording.

The instant interchangeability of the ESDS pad is a nice feature. We also discovered that we could unsnap one corner of the pad and tuck it behind the yoke post of our bass drum pedal to get about 50% of its effect—good for even finer tuning of the bass drum sound.

The coated version of the PowerSonic produced all the same characteristics described above, but with a little dryer response and a touch more attack. For even more attack (on either head version), Remo supplies a Falaam Slam Kevlar impact pad. Heads are available in 18" ($69) , 20" ($72) , 22" ($75), and 24" ($79) diameters. Check 'em out!

(661) 294-5600, www.remo.com

AHEAD 5AB HYBRID DRUMSTICKS

by Rick Van Horn

Until now, most of Ahead's synthetic stick designs seemed to be directed toward high-volume, high-impact playing. Even their "standard" 5A and 5B models were a little heavier and more front-loaded than comparable wood models. As a result, some players who might otherwise benefit from the sticks' durability and unique features tended to shy away from them.

Enter the new 5AB Hybrid model. In a nutshell, it blends a 5B grip for comfort with a 5A taper and tip for greater stick rebound. This design also makes the stick lighter than a regular Ahead 5B.

Ahead sticks start with a sculpted aluminum gripping area and shaft core. A durable and replaceable composite sleeve goes over the core to create the final contour of the shaft, neck, and taper. A nylon tip screws onto the end of the stick. (This is a particularly nifty feature, since tips of different shapes can be interchanged.) The fact that the sticks are manufactured out of synthetic materials means that each stick of a given model offers absolutely the same weight, balance, and feel as every other stick of that model.

The 5AB Hybrid definitely had greater rebound and a lighter feel than any other Ahead stick I've played. I still found the stick a bit more front-heavy than a standard wood 5A or 5B, but I was able to overcome this characteristic by wrapping a couple of layers of Ahead's stick-grip tape to the grip area. Besides adding a bit of mass to the butt end of the stick, the tape allowed me to extend the gripping area a little further forward. This, in turn, let me move my hand up just a bit on the stick, putting more weight to the rear. Once that was done, I enjoyed playing with the sticks immensely. My built-up tape grip also made the sticks a little more comfortable for traditional-grip playing.

Ahead states that their sticks transmit 50% less shock and vibration than wood sticks, and that they last six to ten times longer. I'll vouch for the reduced shock; the sticks felt very comfortable over prolonged playing. And though I didn't deliberately try to break them, the fact that a week's playing left nary a mark on them certainly adds credence to the durability claim—as does the sticks' sixty-day replacement warranty.

If you've avoided experimenting with Ahead sticks because you thought they might be too heavy and clunky for your playing style, you might need to think again. The Hybrid model comes in 5ABS Studio (16") and 5ABC Concert (16 1/4") sizes, each of which lists for $33.99 per pair.

(800) 547-6401, www.bigbangdist.com

SET-FAST DRUMSET ANCHORS

by Rick Van Horn

Drum rugs are a wonderful way to keep your drum and stand legs from sliding on a smooth stage surface. But what do you do when your drums and stands slide on your rug?

Set-Fast Drumset Anchors are designed to attach semi-permanently to almost any carpeted surface, in order to hold bass drum spurs, floor tom legs, and stand feet. And not only do they hold these items, they also serve to mark their exact position from gig to gig.

"Semi-permanently" is the operative phrase here. The Anchors (one three-walled plastic model for stand feet and one drilled steel disk for bass drum spurs) are backed with thousands of micro-hooks. When pressed down onto a carpeted surface, the hooks grab hold of the carpet fibers. And I mean *really* grab. They stayed in place securely against the hardest force that I could exert while playing. And yet, if I wanted to remove an Anchor, it was possible to do so by carefully prying it up from one side with my fingers. Bear in mind that Set-Fast advises against doing this frequently, though, lest the micro-hooks lose their grip.

Whether you carry a commercially sold drum rug (*not* a rubber mat), a piece of home-style carpet with a low pile, or indoor-outdoor carpeting, the Anchors will secure themselves to it. You should be able to roll or fold your rug up with the Anchors in place, without worrying about them coming off in transit. Even so, the judicious use of a marker around each Anchor on the surface of the rug would ensure consistent placement should they somehow be pried off by accident.

Each set of Anchors comes with instructions as to installation, as well as suggestions on how to mark different types of stands so that they can be set up and broken down easily and still fit into their Anchors every time. A set of three Layout Anchors (for stands) sells for $20.99, and ideally you'd need one set for every tripod and trio of floor tom legs on your kit. A pair of Bass Drum Anchors sells for $18.99. The Set-Fast Web site has a nifty step-by-step photomontage of how a kit would be set up using the Anchors. If you've got sliding problems with any of your gear, check 'em out.

(203) 847-5977, www.set-fast.com

MIGHTY GRIP POWDER AND GLOVES

by Mike Haid

If you have a stick-slipping problem as the result of sweaty hands, or if you tend to develop blisters and/or calluses while playing drums, the folks at Mighty Grip offer two products to help you "get a handle" on the problem. The first is a thermoplastic powder that is applied to the hands to prevent sticks from slipping while you play. The second is comfortable goatskin gloves that provide extra hand protection in addition to improved grip. The powder can also be used under the gloves, directly on the hands, to prevent the gloves themselves from rubbing against the skin of the hands.

Mighty Grip powder is not to be used like chalk or a rosin bag. The instructions say to sprinkle only a small amount on the outside of the index finger between the first and third knuckle, then under the thumb knuckle and about an inch on either side of the thumb knuckle (in the general fulcrum area). Then you rub the thumb against the index finger, until it becomes tacky, before picking up your sticks.

I found the powder to be very helpful in relieving tension from my wrists and hands by allowing me to relax my grip a bit—without worrying that my sticks would drop or slide out of my hands. The powder washes off easily with soap and water.

The gloves were most helpful when they were a bit damp from perspiration. The goatskin material seemed to grip the sticks more securely than it did when dry. I should say that while the gloves provided excellent protection to my hands against stick friction, they were a bit cumbersome for my style of playing. I noticed this mainly in the wrist area, where the thickness and size of the fastening straps restricted wrist movement. But this is a personal-comfort issue that will vary from player to player. You might not be bothered by it at all.

Overall, these affordable Mighty Grip products can be quite helpful for drummers in need of hand protection and grip support. A 1/4-ounce bottle of Mighty Grip powder sells for $9.95; the gloves list for a very reasonable $19.95.

(866) 517-7810, www.mightygrip.com

The *New* Modern Drummer 25-Year Digital Archive

THE SINGLE GREATEST SOURCE OF DRUMMING INFO EVER ASSEMBLED!

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Find out why the MD Digital Archive has quickly become the most indispensable drumming resource for drum enthusiasts, who have praised it as "the reference standard for drum and percussion research for years to come," packed with "tons of useful and relevant information."

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PC Users: Windows XP, (Windows 2000, NT), Minimum - 700 MHz Pentium 3 or greater, 512 MB RAM, 10 GB free hard disk space (if copying Archive to hard disk), DVD drive. **Mac Users:** OS X 10.2 or greater, Minimum G3 700 MHz or greater, 512 MB RAM, 10 GB free hard disk space, DVD drive.

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>> DRUM WORKSHOP COLLECTOR' S SERIES FINISHES

DW Collector's Series drums are available in unique graphic finishes, such as the Billiards finish shown here. Designs can be ordered in any custom color scheme and in combination with any Collector's series shell configuration and hardware color option. Also new are Black Ice and Burnt Orange Glass FinishPly finishes.

(805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com

>> TOCA SYNERGY FREESTYLE DJEMBE

Toca's Synergy Freestyle djembe line now includes a 7"-diameter drum ($49) that is excellent for children or players with small hands. The djembe features a durable synthetic seamless shell for unimpeded resonance. A patented design features a protective rubber bottom and a goatskin head that's easily tunable via nylon rope. Synergy Freestyle djembes are available in Fiesta and Woodstock Purple finishes.

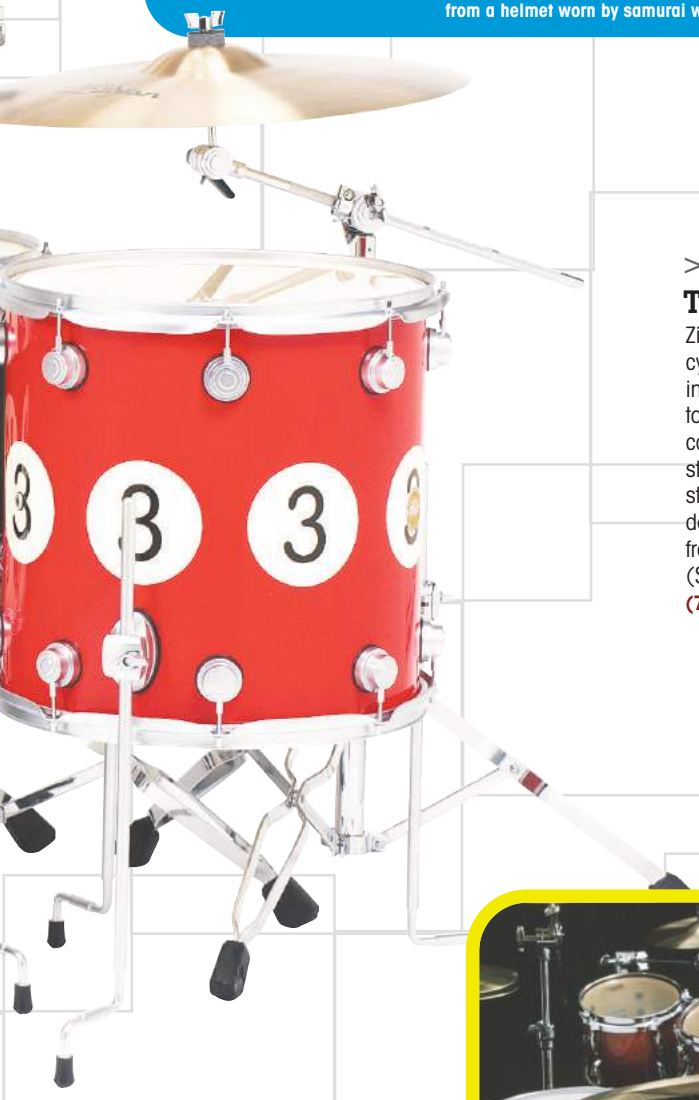
(860) 509-8888, www.tocapercussion.com

>> YAMAHA KABUTO SNARE DRUM

Yamaha's 5 1/2x14 Kabuto snare drum features a steel shell coated with an eye-catching red lacquered finish. The shell provides brightness, while the finish gives the drum unusual depth and warmth. The result is said to be a harmonious compromise between wood and metal snare-drum sounds. List price is $319.

(714) 522-9490, www.yamahadrums.com

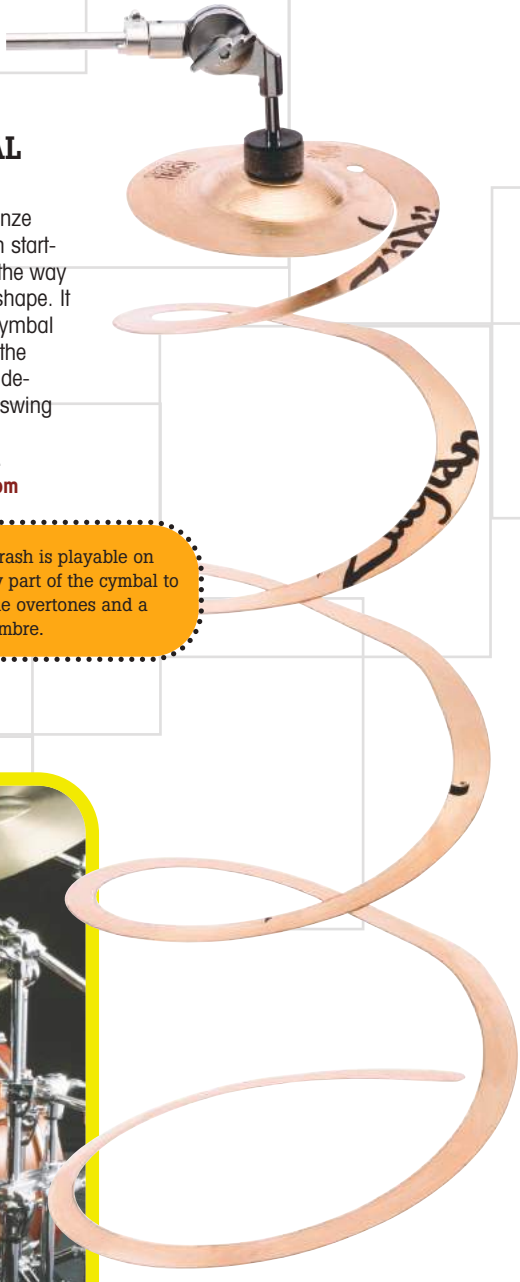
The Kabuto snare drum takes its name from a helmet worn by samurai warriors.



>> ZILDJIAN SPIRAL TRASH CYMBAL

Zildjian's Spiral Trash sheet bronze cymbal is cut in a spiral pattern starting near the bell and going all the way to the edge, resulting in a coil shape. It can be mounted on a regular cymbal stand so its coils wrap around the stand, or hanging from an upside-down cymbal arm so the coils swing free below. It's available in 16" ($240) and 18" ($290) sizes.

(781) 871-2200, www.zildjian.com

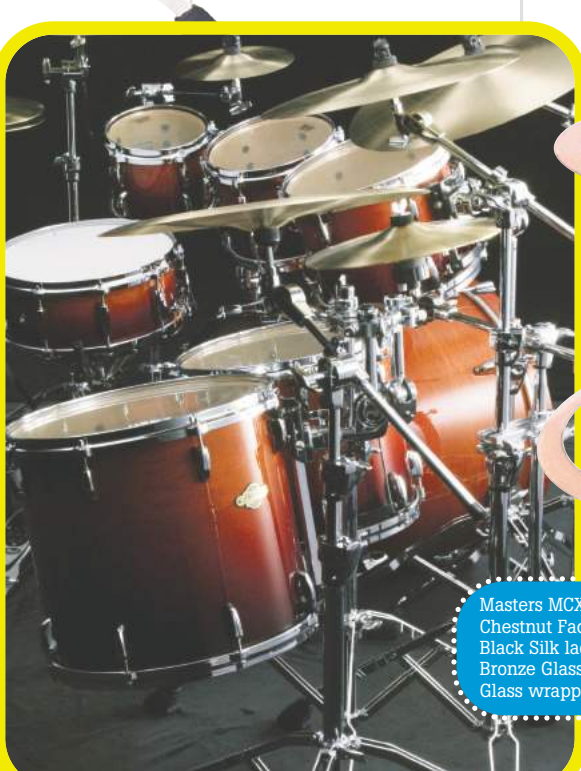


The Spiral Trash is playable on almost every part of the cymbal to create unique overtones and a wave-like timbre.

>> PEARL MASTERS MCX SERIES DRUMKITS

Masters MCX 6-ply 100%-maple shells are constructed using SST Superior Shell Technology. Toms are fitted with MasterCast die-cast hoops, Masters bridge lugs, and Pearl's OptiMount tom mounting system. Matching snares are available in 5 1/2x14 and 6 1/2x14 sizes, with die-cast hoops. List price for a five-piece shell pack is $2,499.

(615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com

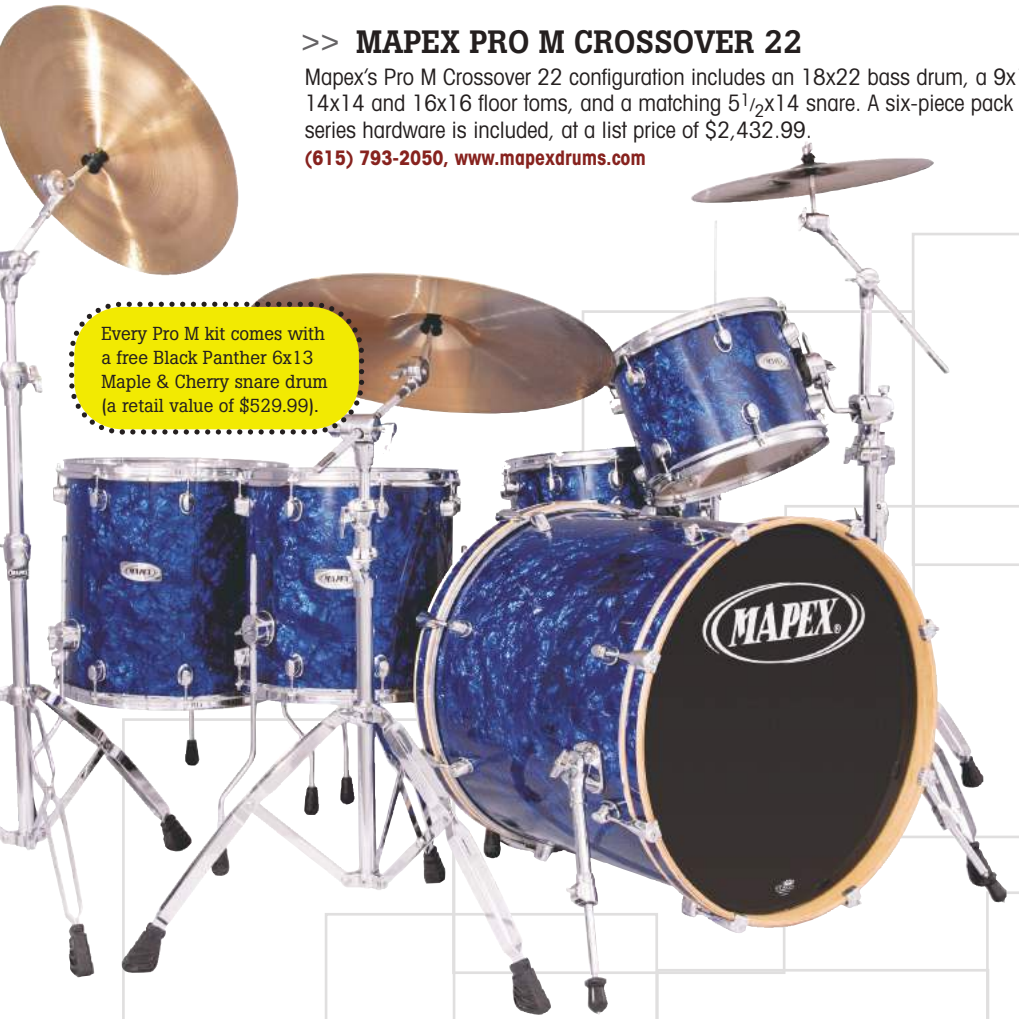


Masters MCX kits are offered in Chestnut Fade (shown here) and Black Silk lacquer, as well as with Bronze Glass, Red Glass, and Pewter Glass wrapped finishes.

>> MAPEX PRO M CROSSOVER 22

Mapex's Pro M Crossover 22 configuration includes an 18x22 bass drum, a 9x12 suspended tom, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, and a matching 5 1/2x14 snare. A six-piece pack of 550A and 750A series hardware is included, at a list price of $2,432.99.

(615) 793-2050, www.mapexdrums.com



Every Pro M kit comes with a free Black Panther 6x13 Maple & Cherry snare drum (a retail value of $529.99).

The Hammerax Meanie

>> TAMA SUPERSTAR HYPER DRIVE DRUMKITS

Tama's Superstar Hyper Drive kits combine shallow, fast-response toms (6 1/2x10, 7x12, 12x14, and 14x16), an 18x22 bass drum, and a 5 1/2x14 snare. Drums feature birch/basswood shells, black nickel hardware, and Tama Power Craft heads. A limited edition of six configurations is available.

(215) 638-8670, www.tama.com

>> HAMMERAX HYBRIDS

Hammerax Hybrids metal percussion instruments incorporate unique designs, metallurgical formulas, hammering, and suspension techniques to create totally original sounds. Models include the Boomywhang (which produces a clean stick sound as well as shimmering crashes with a surprising vibrato), the Glass (a crash-ride instrument capable of producing shimmering crash sounds, and whose center can be raked with sticks for controlled swells), the Meanie (wildly sculpted instruments with an offset dome as well as tonal slots that add smoothness), the DustBowl (a combination of a flat, very dry-sounding cymbal and a crasher effect that can be suspended or placed on top of a hi-hat or cymbal), and the Lash (another slotted instrument with tentacles that wobble at different speeds, yielding swishing crashes and a fast wash).

(727) 442-5050, www.hammerax.com

>> LATIN PERCUSSION JOHN DOLMAYAN SIGNATURE MINI TIMBALES

Latin Percussion has collaborated with System Of A Down's John Dolmayan to create the John Dolmayan Percussion Signature Mini Timbales with Cowbell and Mount Pack. The timbales are fashioned after LP's heritage full-sized Tito Puente timbales, but are reduced to 6" and 8" diameters. The $3\frac{1}{4}$"-deep black nickel–plated steel shells are fitted with traditional Cuban-style tuners.

The drums produce bright percussive effects, as well as traditional center-of-head, rimshot, and shell timbres. Their inherent dryness enables them to blend with a variety of percussion and drums, and they have bright harmonics for penetration. The included Cha-Cha cowbell emits a high-pitched chime with moderate overtones. The heavy-duty black powder-coated mount-all bracket, with its $\frac{3}{8}$" Z rod, securely holds both timbales and the cowbell. List price is $229.

(888) LP-MUSIC, www.lpmusic.com

<< AND WHAT'S MORE >>

PACIFIC's rocker-friendly CXR kits are now available in Artic Blue Oyster and Red Sparkle covered finishes.

(805) 485-6999, www.pacificdrums.com

The Deluxe wheeled cymbal bag from **PROTECTION RACKET** features a triple-layer protective system, internal dividers, and an external front pocket. Extendable legs at the front of the case ensure stability when not in transit. A Deluxe cymbal bag with padded rucksack straps is also offered.

(800) 547-6401, www.bigbangdist.com

GON BOPS Tumbao Pro Custom congas feature Siam oak construction and Contour Crown hoops, and are offered in six lacquer bursts and fade finishes. They're sold individually in quinto, conga, and tumba sizes, each of which comes with a free DW 5210 basket stand.

(805) 485-6999, www.gonbops.com

The **STICK-FLIP** allows a drummer to flip a drumstick into the air with a perfect rotation, making it easy to catch every time. The device mounts easily to the rim of any acoustic drum and is compatible with any size or brand of drumstick. List price is $29.99.

(315) 533-1389, www.stickflip.com

LOS CABOS now offers all of its stick models in red hickory, which has a higher density than white hickory, making it heavier and stronger. Canadian consumers can purchase these sticks through their favorite music store; US drummers can contact the company directly at their Web site. List price is $9.98 per pair.

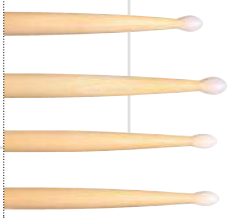
(506) 460-8352, www.loscabosdrumsticks.com

PIERCE drum thrones feature specially contoured seat tops designed to improve a drummer's control, comfort, and longevity. Thrones are available with three different bases and a choice of four seat fabrics.

(423) 949-9000, www.pierceseat.com

LATIN PERCUSSION's 50-bar Folding Bar Chimes may be opened up for a traditional straight-across whisk or folded into a double-row chime for additional playing techniques. The instrument comes in a reusable container that will protect chimes, hinges, and frame. List price is $189.

(888) LP-MUSIC, www.lpmusic.com

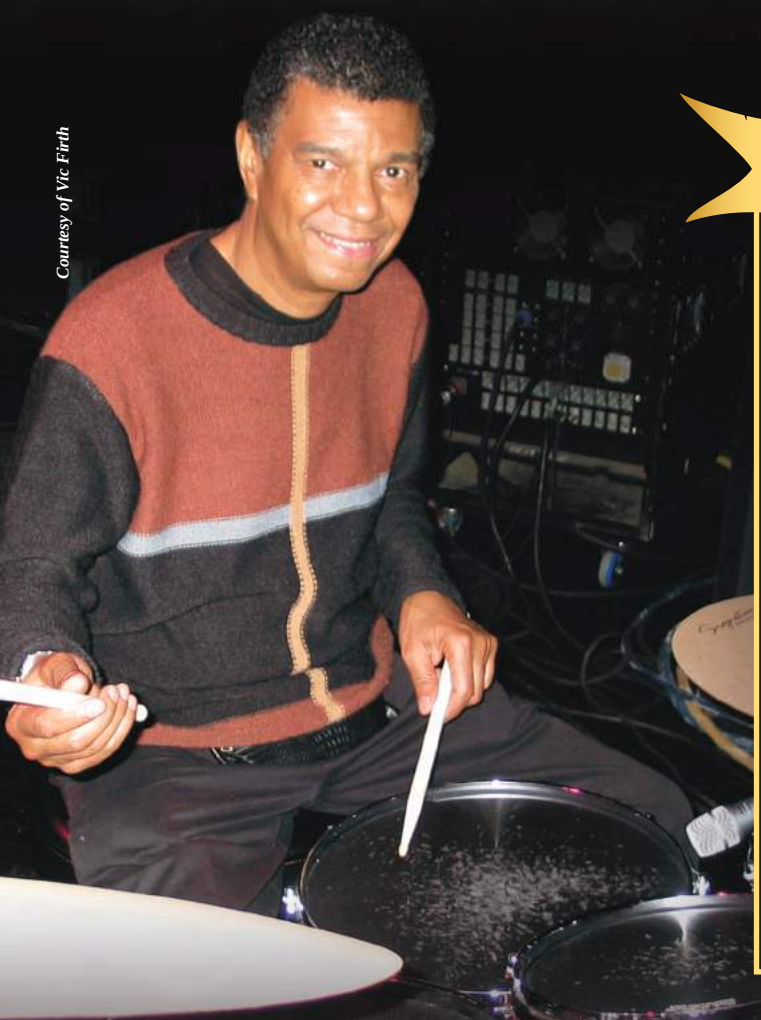


REGAL TIP's Wide 7A, 5A, 5B, and Jazz models have shorter tapers and larger nylon tips for greater clarity on cymbals, while eliminating the chipping of wood tips. List price is $13.50 per pair.

(716) 285-3546, www.regaltip.com

MODERN DRUMMER 2007 READERS POLL Results

Results of the 2007 MD Readers Poll reflect the extreme diversity of today's drumming community. Established stars and hot young talents shared the spotlight, with some surprises thrown in for good measure. Here are the results.



Courtesy of Vic Firth

HALL OF FAME

Jack DeJohnette

Jack DeJohnette is one of the most consistently inventive drummers in jazz. He has a wide-ranging style that renders him capable of playing convincingly in any modern idiom, yet he always maintains a well-defined voice. You *know* when Jack is playing, no matter the situation.

Over his extremely diverse career, Jack has performed with jazz greats Jackie McLean, John Coltrane, and Charles Lloyd. With Miles Davis he recorded the seminal jazz-rock album *Bitches Brew*. He's recorded a bevy of ECM recordings with artists like Jan Garbarek, Kenny Wheeler, and Pat Metheny. And yes, that's Jack on the drums behind the band of high-profile "ringers" in the *Blues Brothers II* movie.

As a bandleader, Jack has led such groups as Compost, Directions, and Special Edition. He's also been a member of Keith Jarrett's Standards Trio, as well as the Gateway Trio with John Abercrombie and Dave Holland. And just last year Jack recorded the stellar *Saudades*, a tribute to Tony Williams' Lifetime, with Trio Beyond (featuring organist Larry Goldings and guitar great John Scofield).

Jack is noted for a remarkably fluid relationship to pulse. Even as he pushes, pulls, and generally obscures the beat beyond recognition, he always maintains a powerful sense of swing. And Jack's tonal palette is huge; no drummer pays closer attention to the sounds that come out of his kit.

A major figure in jazz drumming for nearly forty years, Jack DeJohnette shows no sign of slowing down. He recently established his own Golden Beams Productions label to showcase several new projects. The latest of those, *The Elephant Sleeps But Still Remembers*, is a continuation of what Jack has been doing throughout his career: inspiring and creating music without boundaries.

2006: Charlie Watts
2005: Stewart Copeland
2004: Mike Portnoy
2003: Simon Phillips
2002: Steve Smith
2001: Dennis Chambers

2000: Dave Weckl
1999: Roy Haynes
1998: Ringo Starr
1997: Terry Bozzio
1996: Vinnie Colaiuta
1995: Elvin Jones

1994: Larrie Londin
1993: Jeff Porcaro
1992: Max Roach
1991: Art Blakey
1990: Bill Bruford
1989: Carl Palmer

1988: Joe Morello
1987: Billy Cobham
1986: Tony Williams
1985: Louie Bellson
1984: Steve Gadd
1983: Neil Peart

1982: Keith Moon
1981: John Bonham
1980: Buddy Rich
1979: Gene Krupa

Congratulations

MODERN DRUMMER 2007 READERS POLL WINNER

Brad Wilk
"Rock"

Stanton Moore
"Traditional R&B", "Jam Band"

Bill Stewart
"Contemporary Jazz"

Vinnie Colaiuta
"Studio", "All Around"

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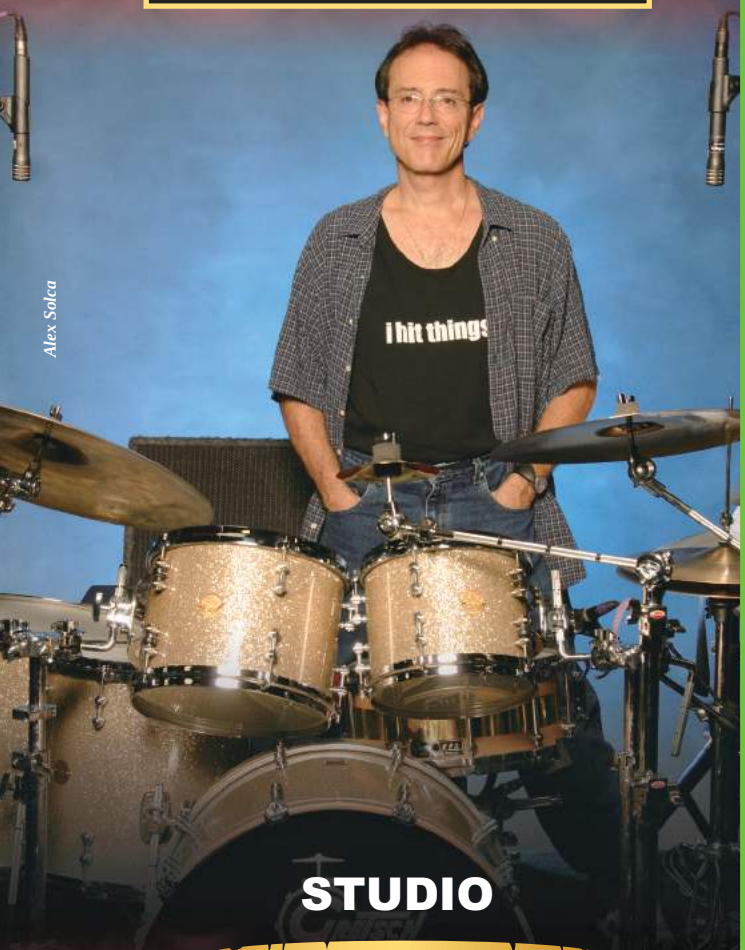
ALL-AROUND

Vinnie Colaiuta

2. Steve Gadd
3. Keith Carlock
4. Steve Smith
5. Thomas Lang

"All-around" indeed. Take a look at Vinnie's "Studio Drummer" credits below. Then factor in his live playing, including heavy touring in 2006 with jazz/funk keyboard great Herbie Hancock.



Alex Solca

STUDIO

Vinnie Colaiuta

2. Steve Gadd
3. Kenny Aronoff
4. Josh Freese
5. Matt Chamberlain

Vinnie cemented his status as studio drumming's top ace with 2006 appearances on albums by such diverse artists as Chick Corea, Chris Botti, R&B legend Sam Moore, Michael Franks, Lee Ritenour, LeAnn Rimes, Michael Bublé, Michael McDonald, and John McLaughlin—to say nothing of The Pussycat Dolls, as well as an all-star project called *Pink Floyd's The Wall Revisited.*

Jay Blakesberg

ROCK

Chad Smith

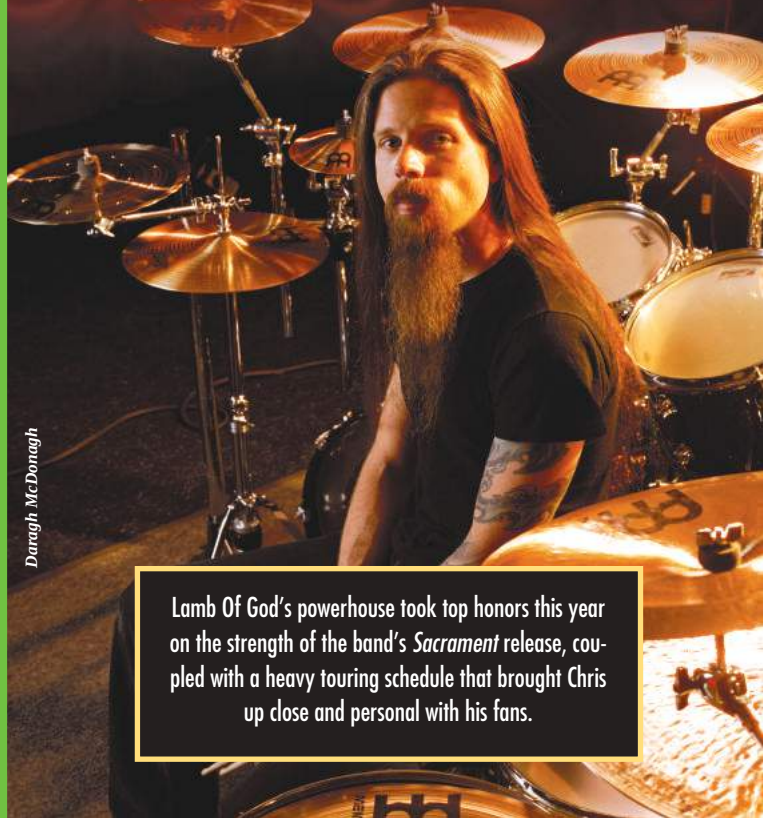
2. Neil Peart
3. Zak Starkey
4. Matt Cameron
5. Brad Wilk

Chad's playing on The Red Hot Chili Peppers' 2006 hit, *Stadium Arcadium,* is enough to justify his win in this category. But he also drummed on (and produced) ex–Deep Purple singer Glenn Hughes' *Music For The Divine,* and contributed rollicking rock grooves to The Dixie Chicks' *Taking The Long Way.* Now *there's* a rocker who gets around!

METAL

Chris Adler

2. Jason Bittner
3. Tomas Haake
4. Dave Lombardo
5. Travis Smith



Daragh McDonagh

Lamb Of God's powerhouse took top honors this year on the strength of the band's *Sacrament* release, coupled with a heavy touring schedule that brought Chris up close and personal with his fans.

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Like No Other Drum Company.

Heinz Kronberger

PROG

Gavin Harrison

2. Mike Portnoy
3. Virgil Donati
4. Danny Carey
5. Chris Pennie

Between his challenging method books and DVDs and his otherworldly playing with Porcupine Tree, Gavin has taken prog drumming into new directions—and has brought a legion of fans into his camp.

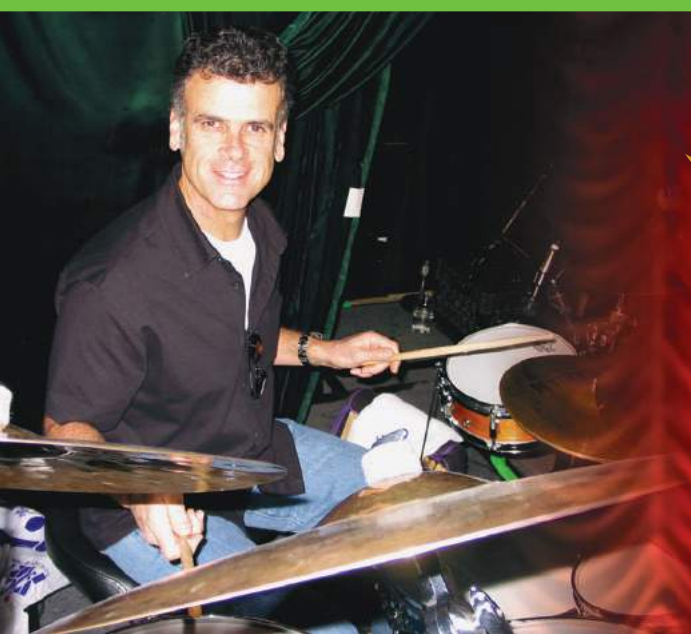
POP

John Blackwell

2. Keith Carlock
3. Kenny Aronoff
4. Ronnie Vannucci
5. Nigel Olsson

Holding the drum chair (to say nothing of livening up the stage show) for one of 2006's biggest pop artists—Justin Timberlake—brought John into the spotlight yet again.

Heinz Kronberger



TRADITIONAL R&B

David Garibaldi

2. Bernard Purdie
3. Steve Jordan
4. Stanton Moore
5. Marvin McQuitty

Constant touring with funk juggernaut Tower Of Power—along with his *Code Of Funk* book/CD/DVD project, the DVD release of his original *Tower Of Groove* videos, and his popular columns in *MD*—brought DG back to the top among trad R&B drummers.

HERE'S TO THE WINNERS.

pro·mark®

Rock
Neil Peart

Metal
Chris Adler
Jason Bittner
Dave Lombardo
Travis Smith

Punk
Bill Stevenson

Progressive
Mike Portnoy

Hip Hop
Teddy Campbell

Pop
Ronnie Vannucci

Jam Band
Carter Beauford

Fusion
Zach Hill

Percussionist
Evelyn Glennie

Up and Coming
Ronald Bruner, Jr.

Educational Book
Joe Morello
Marco Minnemann
Rick Latham

Educational DVD
Chris Adler
Jason Bittner
Ray Luzier
Stephen Perkins

Recorded Performance
Chris Adler
Mike Portnoy

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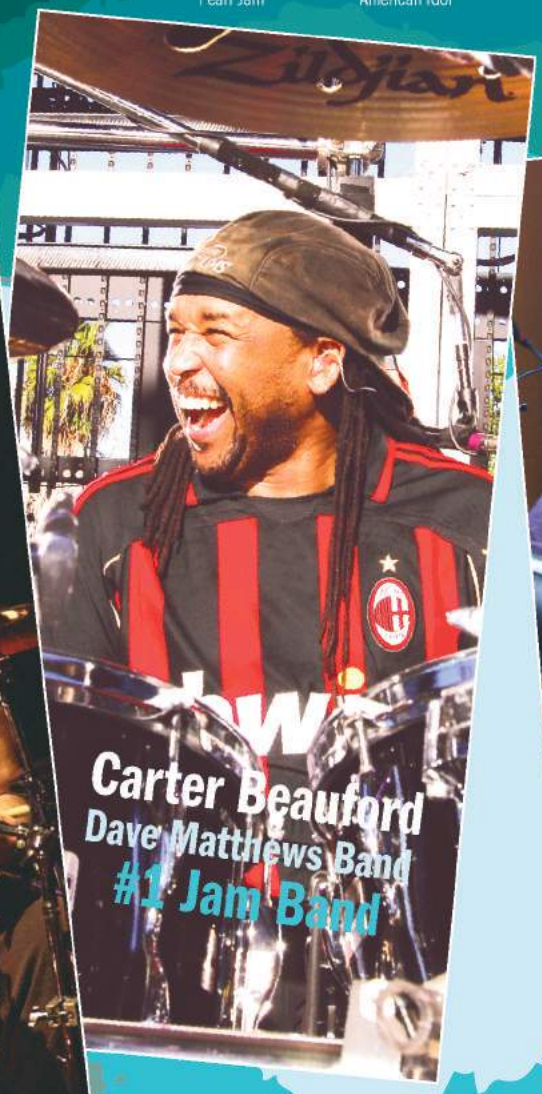
Kenny Aronoff | Jeff Ballard (Fly/Brad Mehldau) | Eddie Bayers Recording Artist | Brian Blade Joshua Redman | Louie Bellson | Clayton Cameron | Matt Cameron Pearl Jam | Teddy Campbell American Idol



Giovanni Hidalgo | Mike Mangini | Billy Martin Medeski, Martin and Wood | Marvin McQuitty | Marco Minnemann | Stephen Perkins Panic Channel/Jane's Addiction | Antonio Sanchez Pat Metheny Group | Steve Smith Vital Information

Keith Carlock
Steely Dan

Luis Conte

Tré Cool
Green Day

Peter Erskine

Steve Gadd
James Taylor/Paul Simon

Trilok Gurtu

Roy Haynes

Gerald Heyward

?uestlove
The Roots
#1 R&B/Hip-Hop

Travis Barker
+44
#1 Punk

Alex Acuña
#1 Percussionist

MODERN DRUMMER
READERS POLL 2007

AND THE
WINNERS ARE...

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Aaron Spears
Usher/American Idol Live

Zak Starkey
The Who

Bill Stewart
John Scofield

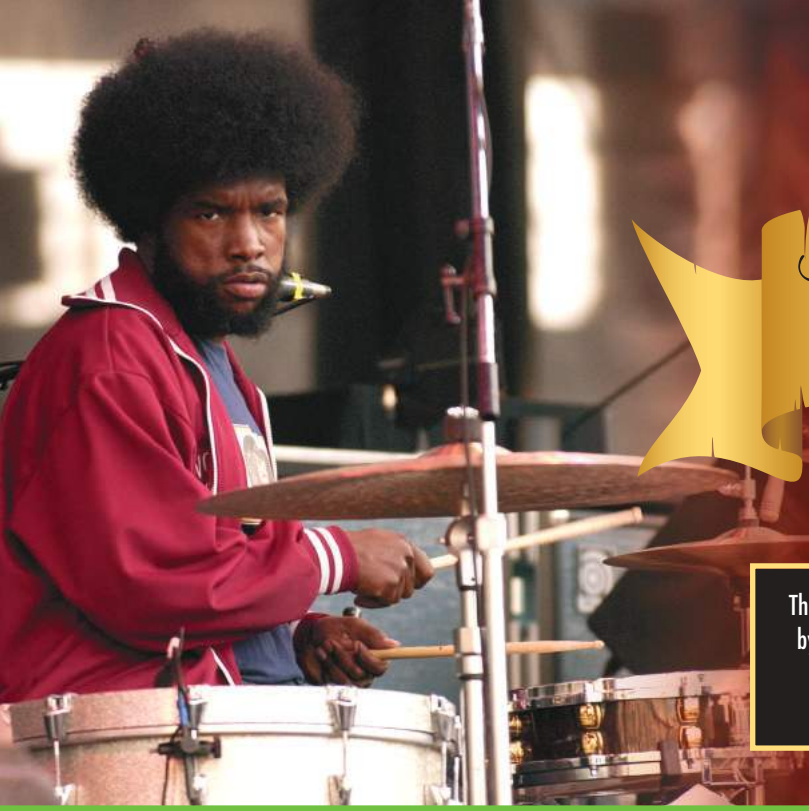
Kim Thompson
Mike Stern

Ronnie Vannucci
The Killers

Brooks Wackerman
Bad Religion

Billy Ward

Matt Wilson
Matt Wilson Quartet



R&B/HIP-HOP

Ahmir "?uestlove" Thompson

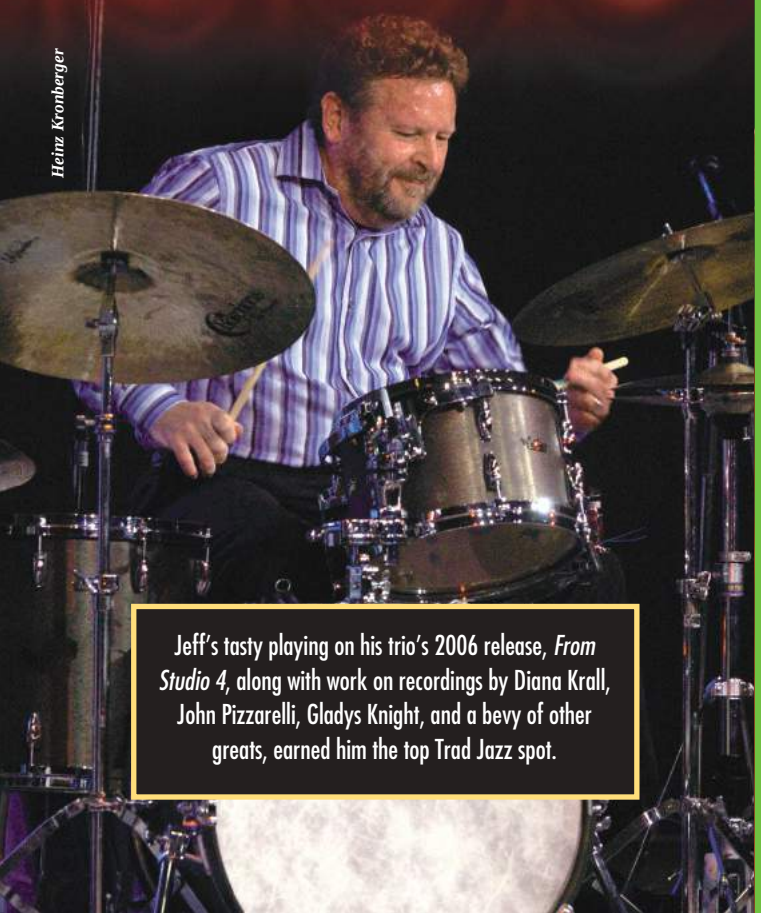
2. Gerald Heyward
3. Teddy Campbell
4. Aaron Spears
5. Lil' John Roberts

The Roots' 2006 *Game Theory* album is considered by many to be the group's sharpest and heaviest work, and served to reaffirm ?uestlove's preeminence in this category.

TRADITIONAL JAZZ

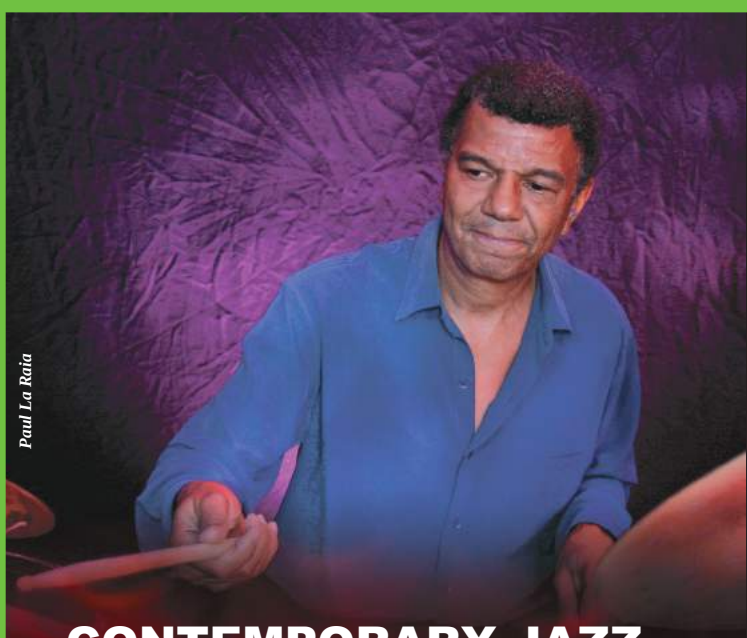
Jeff Hamilton

2. Roy Haynes
3. Peter Erskine
4. Louie Bellson
5. Matt Wilson



Heinz Kronberger

Jeff's tasty playing on his trio's 2006 release, *From Studio 4*, along with work on recordings by Diana Krall, John Pizzarelli, Gladys Knight, and a bevy of other greats, earned him the top Trad Jazz spot.



Paul La Raia

CONTEMPORARY JAZZ

Jack DeJohnette

2. Bill Stewart
3. Jeff Ballard
4. Brian Blade
5. Billy Kilson

It's obvious that 2006 was Jack's year in the ears—and hearts—of jazz drummers. In addition to his great playing on Trio Beyond's *Saudades* CD, Jack also appeared on new recordings by Alice Coltrane and Steve Khan, and on re-releases from Jackie McLean, Sonny Rollins, McCoy Tyner, Joe Henderson, and Weather Report.

REMO *Congratulates* OUR MODERN DRUMMER 2007 READERS POLL WINNERS

ROCK: CHAD SMITH
Neil Peart, Zak Starkey
Matt Cameron, Brad Wilk

METAL:
Dave Lombardo

PUNK: TRAVIS BARKER
Josh Freese, Tré Cool

PROG: GAVIN HARRISON
Mike Portnoy, Virgil Donati

R&B/HIP-HOP: AHMIR "?UESTLOVE" THOMPSON
Gerald Heyward, Teddy Campbell
Aaron Spears, Lil' John Roberts

TRADITIONAL R&B: DAVID GARIBALDI
Steve Jordan, Stanton Moore,
Marvin McQuitty

POP: JOHN BLACKWELL
Keith Carlock, Kenny Aronoff
Ronnie Vannucci, Nigel Olsson

JAM BAND: CARTER BEAUFORD
Stanton Moore, Rodney Holmes

TRADITIONAL JAZZ: JEFF HAMILTON
Roy Haynes, Louie Bellson, Matt Wilson

CONTEMPORARY JAZZ:
Bill Stewart, Billy Kilson

FUSION: DAVE WECKL

STUDIO: VINNIE COLAIUTA
Steve Gadd, Kenny Aronoff
Josh Freese, Matt Chamberlain

COUNTRY: PAUL LEIM
Eddie Bayers, Chris McHugh
Jim Riley

WORLD MUSIC:
Glen Velez, Jamey Haddad, Trilok Gurtu

PERCUSSIONIST:
Luis Conte
Lenny Castro

UP & COMING: RONALD BRUNER JR.
(Stanley Clarke, Kenny Garrett, Suicidal Tendencies)
Kim Thompson (Beyoncé, Mike Stern)

ALL AROUND: VINNIE COLAIUTA
Steve Gadd, Keith Carlock
Steve Smith, Thomas Lang

EDUCATIONAL BOOK:
David Garibaldi: The Code Of Funk

CLINICIAN: VIRGIL DONATI
Thomas Lang, Mike Mangini

EDUCATIONAL DVD: THOMAS LANG:
CREATIVE COORDINATION & ADVANCE FOOT TECHNIQUE (Hudson Music),
Ray Luzier: Ray Luzier
Clayton Cameron: Brushworks, The DVD
Stephen Perkins: A Drummer's Life

RECORDED PERFORMANCE:
MIKE PORTNOY Dream Theater:
Score: X0X (DVD)
Chad Smith Red Hot Chili Peppers:
Stadium Arcadium

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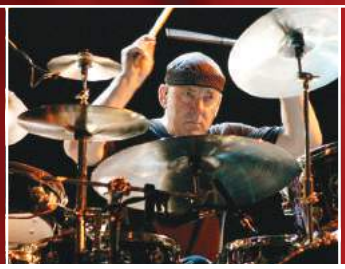
Thank You Voters...

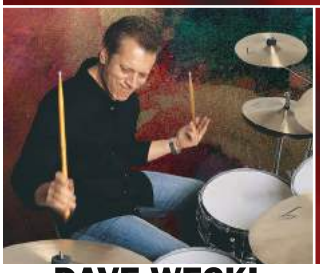
DAVID GARIBALDI
#1 TRADITIONAL R&B
EDUCATIONAL BOOK: *The Code of Funk*

MIKE PORTNOY
#1 RECORDED PERFORMANCE
Dream Theater: Score: XOX (DVD)
PROG



NEIL PEART
ROCK

CHAD SMITH
#1 ROCK
RECORDED PERFORMANCE:
Red Hot Chili Peppers: Stadium Arcadium



DAVE WECKL
#1 FUSION

BILLY COBHAM
FUSION

TERRY BOZZIO
FUSION

CHRIS PENNIE
PROG

JIM RILEY
COUNTRY

CHRIS MCHUGH
COUNTRY

JOHN BLACKWELL
#1 POP

RONALD BRUNER JR.
#1 UP & COMING

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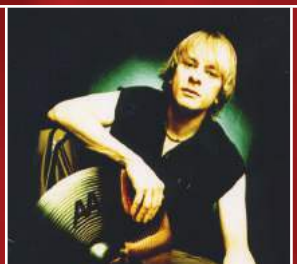
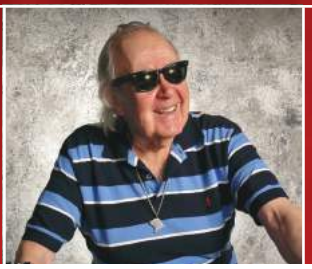


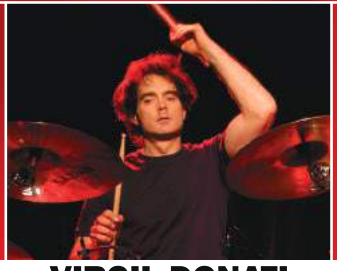
RAY LUZIER
EDUCATIONAL DVD:
Ray Luzier: Double Bass Drum Techniques



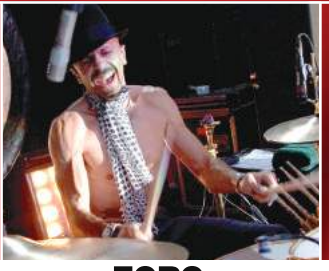
JOE MORELLO
#1 EDUCATIONAL BOOK:
Master Studies II

JACK DEJOHNETTE
#1 HALL OF FAME
#1 CONTEMPORARY JAZZ
RECORDED PERFORMANCE:
Trio Beyond: Saudades

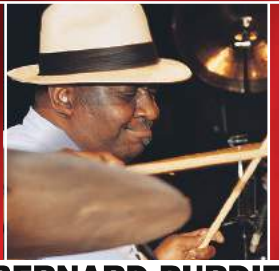
BILLY KILSON
CONTEMPORARY JAZZ



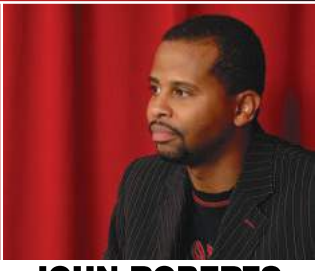
VIRGIL DONATI
#1 CLINICIAN
PROG



ZORO
CLINICIAN



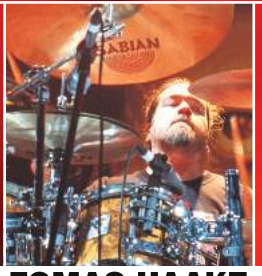
BERNARD PURDIE
TRADITIONAL R&B



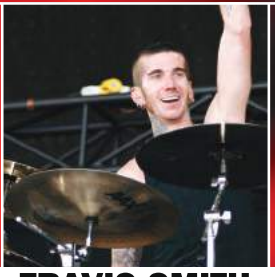
JOHN ROBERTS
R&B/HIP-HOP

MARK GUILIANA
UP & COMING

DEREK RODDY
UP & COMING

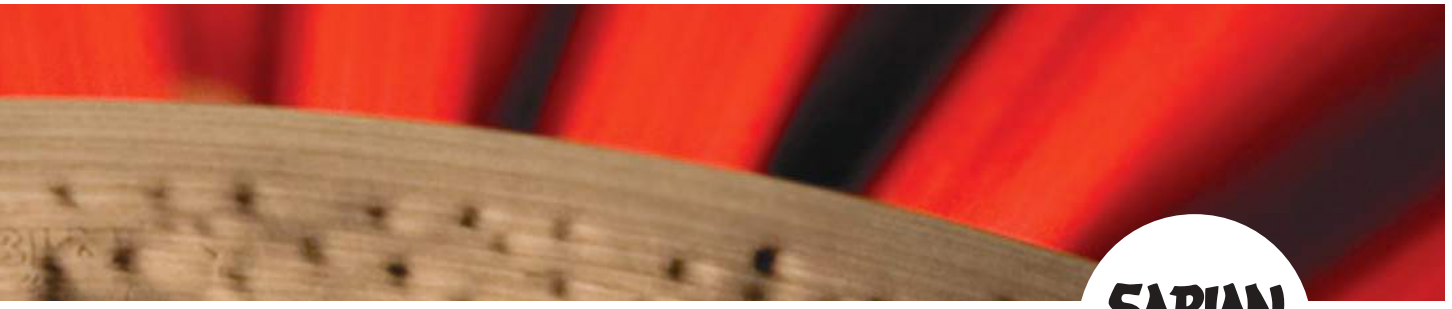


TOMAS HAAKE
METAL



TRAVIS SMITH
METAL

EVELYN GLENNIE
PERCUSSIONIST



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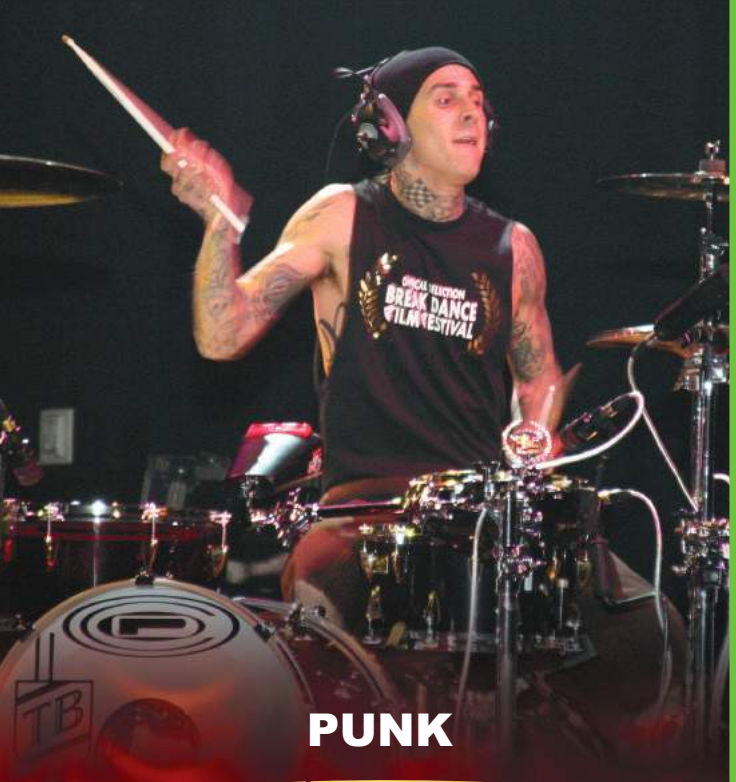
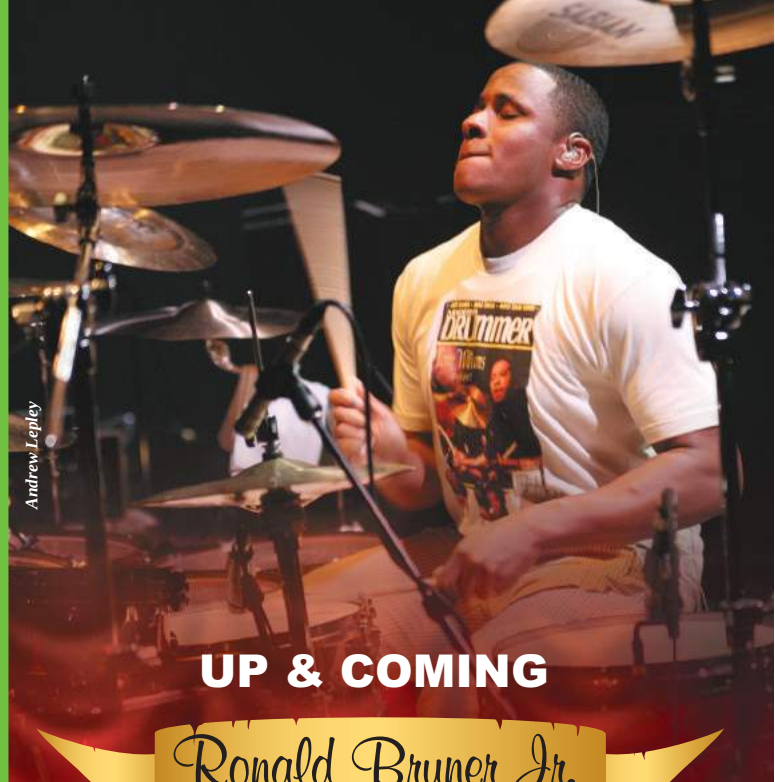


PUNK

Travis Barker

2. Josh Freese
3. Brooks Wackerman
4. Bill Stevenson
5. Tré Cool

Travis's new band, +44, may be billed loosely as an alternative rock group, but his aggressive playing on their *When Your Heart Stops Beating* album still earned him the nod in this category.



Andrew Lepley

UP & COMING

Ronald Bruner Jr.

(Stanley Clarke, Kenny Garrett, Suicidal Tendencies)

2. Kim Thompson (Beyoncé, Mike Stern)
3. Brann Dailor (Mastodon)
4. Mark Guiliana (Avishai Cohen)
5. Derek Roddy (Today Is The Day, ex–Hate Eternal)

You don't open the Modern Drummer Festival Weekend unless you've got something to bring to the show. Ronald brought plenty to the 2006 Festival, based on his versatile playing with fusion bass great Stanley Clarke, jazz saxophonist Kenny Garrett, and hardcore punk-rock icons Suicidal Tendencies. *MD* readers have had their eyes on him ever since.

JAM BAND

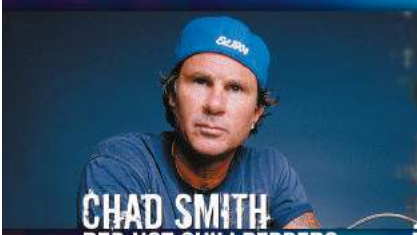
Carter Beauford

2. Stanton Moore
3. Billy Martin
4. Joe Russo
5. Rodney Holmes

This category recognizes accomplishment in the area of improvisational rock music. The Dave Matthews Band has retained its preeminence in this genre, propelled by the drumming of Carter Beauford.

CONGRATULATIONS

TO OUR ARTISTS WHO PLACED IN THE 2007 MODERN DRUMMER READERS POLL



CHAD SMITH
RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS
Chad Smith's Funk Blaster

JOSH FREESE
NINE INCH NAILS /
A PERFECT CIRCLE
Josh Freese's H-220

BROOKS WACKERMAN
BAD RELIGION / TENACIOUS D
2B Wood

VIRGIL DONATI
PLANET X / INDEPENDENT
Virgil Donati's Assault /
Shedder / Powerhouse

JOHN BLACKWELL
JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE
John Blackwell's Jia Angel /
Retractable Wire Brush

CHRIS PENNIE
THE DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN /
COHEED AND CAMBRIA
XD-5B Wood / Slick Nut

LIL' JOHN ROBERTS
JANET JACKSON
Lil' John Roberts' Philly Style

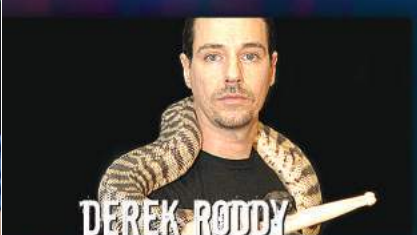
RODNEY HOLMES
STEVE KIMOCK / INDEPENDENT
5B Wood / 5A Wood /
Poly Flex Brush / Splashstick Lite

BILLY KILSON
CHRIS BOTTI
5A Wood

BRANN DAILOR
MASTODON
5B Wood

KIM THOMPSON
BEYONCE'
Phat Ride

JIM RILEY
RASCAL FLATTS
Color Wrap 5B Red Sparkle /
Retractable Wire Brush / Slick Nut



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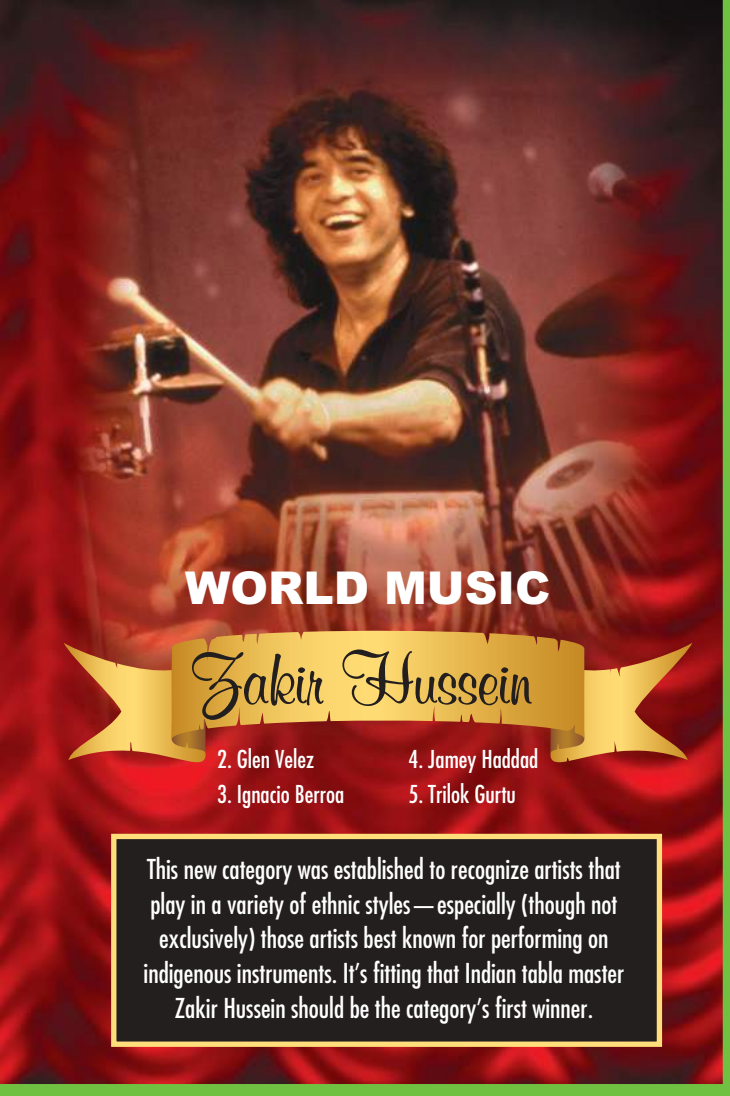
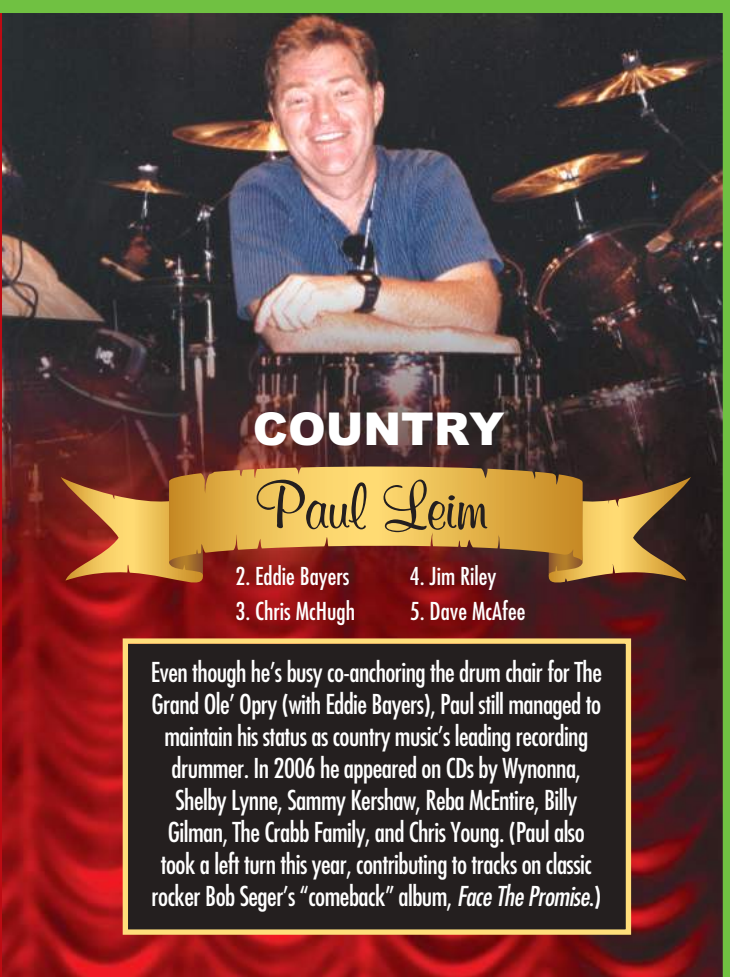


WORLD MUSIC

Zakir Hussein

2. Glen Velez
3. Ignacio Berroa
4. Jamey Haddad
5. Trilok Gurtu

This new category was established to recognize artists that play in a variety of ethnic styles—especially (though not exclusively) those artists best known for performing on indigenous instruments. It's fitting that Indian tabla master Zakir Hussein should be the category's first winner.



COUNTRY

Paul Leim

2. Eddie Bayers
3. Chris McHugh
4. Jim Riley
5. Dave McAfee

Even though he's busy co-anchoring the drum chair for The Grand Ole' Opry (with Eddie Bayers), Paul still managed to maintain his status as country music's leading recording drummer. In 2006 he appeared on CDs by Wynonna, Shelby Lynne, Sammy Kershaw, Reba McEntire, Billy Gilman, The Crabb Family, and Chris Young. (Paul also took a left turn this year, contributing to tracks on classic rocker Bob Seger's "comeback" album, *Face The Promise*.)

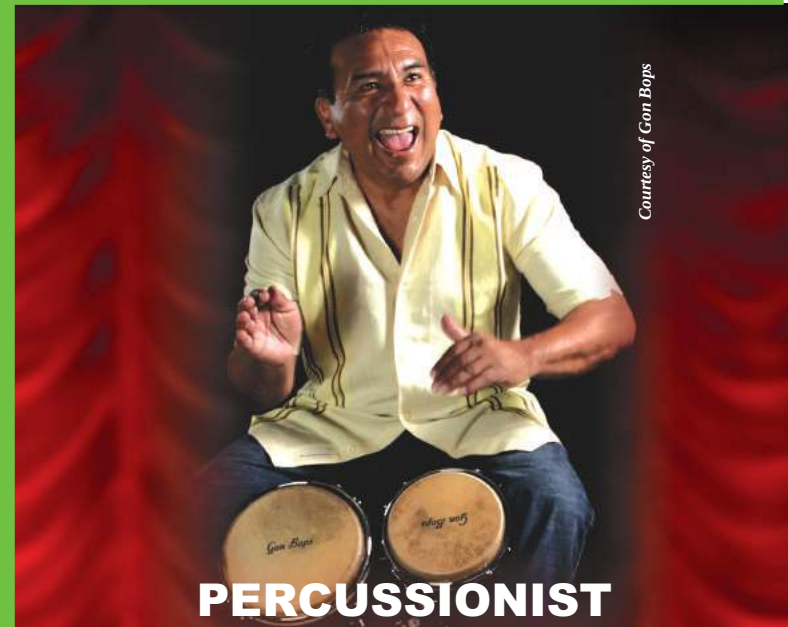
Andrew Lepley

FUSION

Dave Weckl

2. Billy Cobham
3. Terry Bozzio
4. Antonio Sanchez
5. Zach Hill

Dave and his band were busy on the road last year, bringing their high-energy music—and Dave's unique drumming style—to audiences across the country. Drummers in those audiences voted Dave the winner in this category.



Courtesy of Gon Bops

PERCUSSIONIST

Alex Acuña

2. Luis Conte
3. Giovanni Hidalgo
4. Lenny Castro
5. Evelyn Glennie

Alex is a highly regarded clinician and performer. But he's also a first-call studio percussionist. In 2006, he lent his unique talents to recordings by the likes of Joe Zawinul, Lee Ritenour, David Benoit, and Scott Kinsey, and to the movie soundtracks for *Happy Feet* and *Blood Diamonds*.

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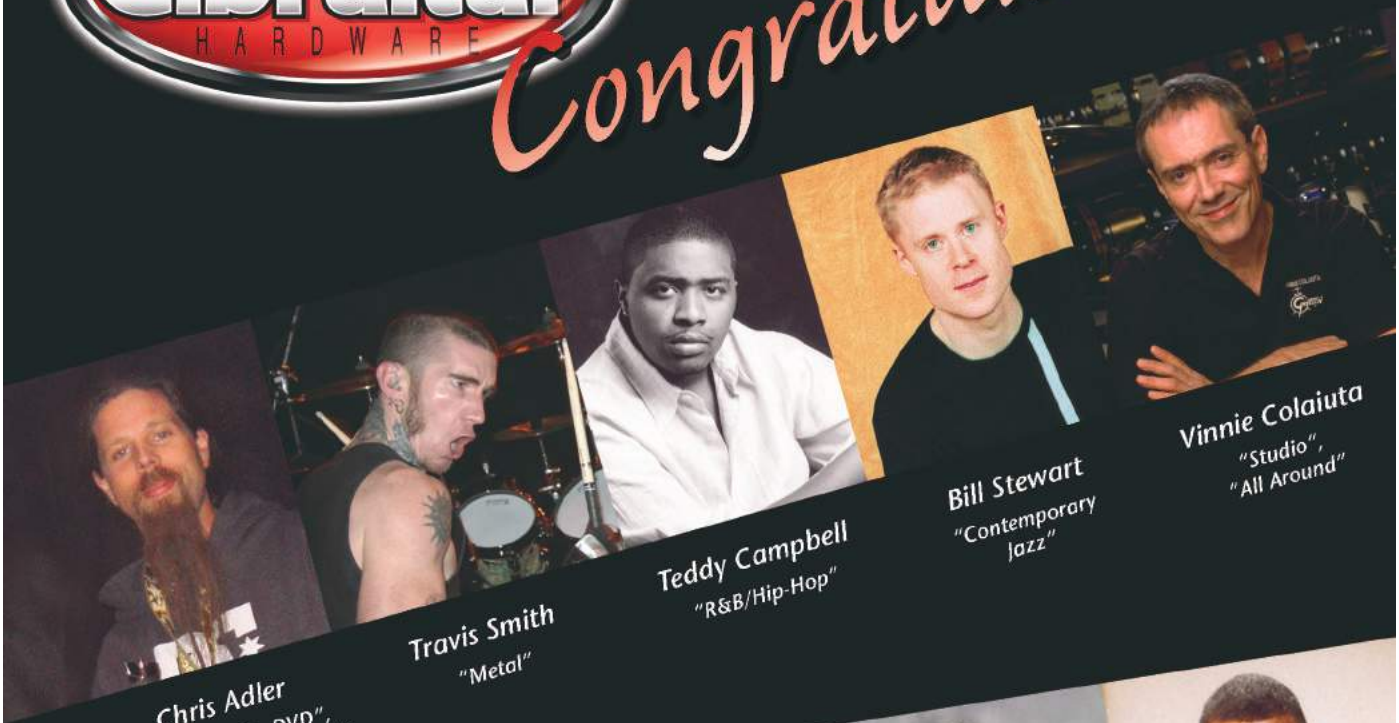

Chris Adler
"Metal", "Edu. DVD",
"Recorded Performance"

Travis Smith
"Metal"

Teddy Campbell
"R&B/Hip-Hop"

Bill Stewart
"Contemporary Jazz"

Vinnie Colaiuta
"Studio",
"All Around"

Jim Riley
"Country"

Luis Conte
"Percussionist"

Lenny Castro
"Percussionist"

Thomas Lang
"Clinician",
"All Around",
"Educational DVD"

Clayton Cameron
"Educational DVD"

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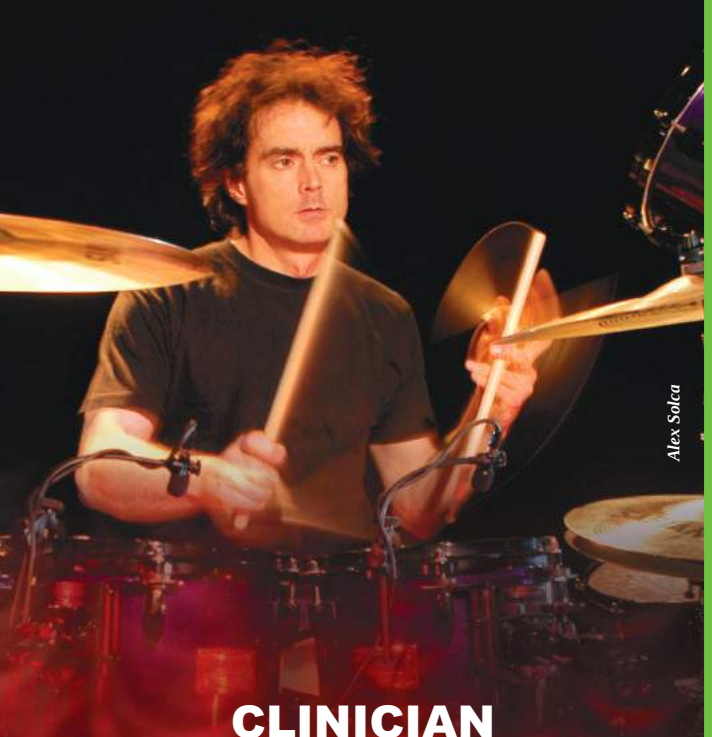

Alex Solca

CLINICIAN

Virgil Donati

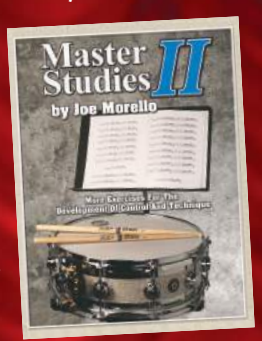
2. Billy Ward
3. Thomas Lang
4. Zoro
5. Mike Mangini

The Thunder From Down Under spent many days on the clinic trail last year, dropping jaws around the world with his incredible chops and unparalleled intensity.

EDUCATIONAL BOOK

Joe Morello

MASTER STUDIES II
(Modern Drummer Publications)



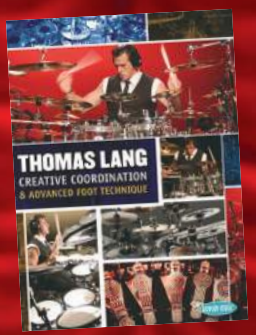
2. Peter Erskine: *Time Awareness For All Musicians*
3. David Garibaldi: *The Code Of Funk*
4. Marco Minnemann (with Rick Gratton): *Maximum Minnemann*
5. Rick Latham: *Contemporary Drumset Techniques* (2006 updated edition)

Joe's long-awaited follow-up to his great hand-development workbook proved to be as valuable to drummers as its predecessor. Back to the woodshed, anyone?

EDUCATIONAL DVD

Thomas Lang

CREATIVE COORDINATION & ADVANCED FOOT TECHNIQUE
(Hudson Music)



2. Ray Luzier: *Ray Luzier*
3. Clayton Cameron: *Brushworks, The DVD*
4. Stephen Perkins: *A Drummer's Life*
5. Chris Adler & Jason Bittner: *Live At Modern Drummer Festival 2005*

Thomas's second DVD came on the market late in 2006. But apparently drummers were eagerly awaiting it, because it quickly became the most popular release of the year—attesting to the influence enjoyed by the technical wizard from Austria.

RECORDED PERFORMANCE

Mike Portnoy

Dream Theater: *Score* (DVD)

2. Chad Smith—Red Hot Chili Peppers: *Stadium Arcadium*
3. Chris Adler—Lamb Of God: *Sacrament*
4. Jack DeJohnette—Trio Beyond: *Saudades*
5. Ignacio Berroa: *Codes*

This performance DVD showcases Dream Theater on their 20th Anniversary world tour, including dates with The Octavarium Orchestra. Excellent production and outstanding views of Mike Portnoy's drumming earned it the win in this category.

READERS POLL SUBSCRIPTION GIVEAWAY

In appreciation for the participation of *MD*'s readership in this year's poll, three ballots were drawn at random to determine the winners of a free one-year subscription to *MD*. Those winners are **Logan Kirby** of Nashville, Tennessee, **Jim Huckabay** of San Francisco, California, and **Freddie Williams** of Brooklyn, New York. Congratulations from *Modern Drummer*!

MODERN DRUMMER 2007 READERS POLL WINNER

JACK DEJOHNETTE
WINNER HALL OF FAME & CONTEMPORARY JAZZ
#4 RECORDED PERFORMANCE

GAVIN HARRISON
WINNER PROGRESSIVE

THOMAS LANG
WINNER EDUCATIONAL DVD
#3 CLINICIAN
#5 ALL AROUND

TOMAS HAAKE
#3 METAL

DANNY CAREY
#4 PROGRESSIVE

DEREK RODDY
#5 UP & COMING

STEVE SMITH
#4 ALL AROUND

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READERS POLL

MIKE PORTNOY
dream theater
#1 recorded performance
#2 prog

JASON BITTNER
shadows fall
#2 metal
#5 educational DVD

BRANN DAILOR
mastodon
#3 up & coming

LIL' JOHN ROBERTS
janet jackson
#5 r&b/hip-hop

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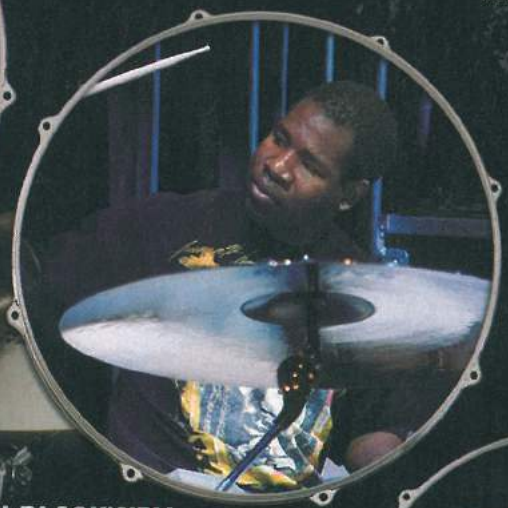


JOHN BLACKWELL
justin timberlake
#1 pop

KENNY ARONOFF
john fogerty
#3 pop
#3 studio

DAVE LOMBARDO
slayer
#4 metal

RODNEY HOLMES
steve kimock band
#5 jam

Enthusiasts Who Voted For Their Favorite Players!

Andrew Lepley

Drum Wizard Jeff Ballard

Fresh Perspectives On Jazz Drumming

by T. Bruce Wittet

This much is unanimously agreed upon: In the hierarchy of jazz drummers, Jeff Ballard has climbed so high he can clearly see the summit. What's more, he's making edgy, contemporary music with the top players of our day, including Chick Corea, Brad Mehldau, Joshua Redman, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Avishai Cohen, Larry Grenadier, Mark Turner, Ben Allison, and Guillermo Klein. Concurrently, he runs the minimalist cooperative ensemble Fly with Grenadier and Turner. Before that he learned the ropes while touring with Ray Charles, Eddie Harris, and Bobby Hutcherson.

Recently, Ballard, Mehldau, and Grenadier joined ranks with guitar giant Pat Metheny, recorded two albums, and embarked on the most heralded jazz tour in recent memory. The Metheny/Mehldau collaboration is simply *the* jazz supergroup of the decade. Ballard's edgy, energetic, and probing approach in this group embraces everything from grooving—"carpet laying," as he calls it—to wringing out intricate phrases so quietly they almost slip below the radar.

It's all gotten the Internet forums buzzing. Readers query Jeff's unique grip, his vintage Camco Oaklawn drums, and his ancient Turkish K ride with the oddly placed rivet holes. (The latest threads were comsumed with Jeff's abandoning his Camcos for oak-shelled Yamahas—and his well-ridden veteran Ks for modern Zildjians.) Fans go on at length about his exciting solos, during which he'll play with bare hands, sticks, mallets, or whatever else is handy on top of heads, rims, hardware tubing, shells, or hand drums.

The endorsement issues are significant. They help explain why someone at the top of his game, someone who is exalted and even worshipped, is not a face that immediately pops to mind. Jeff has been conspicuously absent from industry ads, which tend to keep other drummers steadily in our gaze. That hasn't bothered Jeff, however. Until recently, he's been satisfied to play his Camcos, occasionally adding a piece here and there, such as a DW 10" tom and a modern Zildjian K Custom Dry Complex (aka Bill Stewart) ride at his own pace, no strings attached.

Maybe it's the fact that Jeff's crusty ride has been repaired one too many times by New York magician Nodar Rode, or maybe it's that Jeff's drums occasionally pale in tone beside newer ones he's encountered on the road. What's certain is that Ballard has come to realize that it's nigh time to search for back-up instruments. So Jeff Ballard is tentatively embracing the drum industry. For this reason, you may be seeing a lot more of Ballard's mug in the coming months in ads for, say, Yamaha and Zildjian. And it's a sure thing you'll see him score high on jazz drummer polls. (In fact, he placed third in the contemporary jazz category of *MD*'s most recent readers poll, right behind Jack DeJohnette and Bill Stewart.)

Jeff's reputation flows from his exceptional abilities as an accompanist. Sometimes he scurries like a rabbit over his skins, darting here or there to affect subtle shifts in timbre and nuance—moves that don't seem like much in themselves but that add up to a brilliant drum part. Other times, he's a terrier, feverishly scratching at some surface, knowing that it will yield pay dirt. Other times still, he's laying back, one eye cocked wisely, looking to join the fray at precisely the right moment.

Although Ballard is adept at striking kit drums, hand drums, and rattlers with mallets, fingers, or even fingernails, there's not a trace of shtick in his bones. He may be fascinating to watch, but nothing Ballard plays is for show; it all means something. Frightfully quick, his mind is making split-second assessments, deciding where to place what he calls "weight" in order to make the music behave in an appropriate manner. For Jeff, the drum is alive. It's an *animal* (to employ more Jeff-speak), constantly on the move. His choice of hide-like Fiberskyn heads is no coincidence.

Jeff will soon be scouring for rare tones on a Yamaha Oak Custom kit. What attracted him to Yamaha oak drums was their hypersensitivity to hands and various striking implements. In addition, he finds that they yield more melodic tones, whereby he can approximate definite pitches. And if he puts muscle into them, as he must on Joshua Redman's gig, they will project effortlessly.

Similarly, Ballard has completed round one of a collaboration with Zildjian master cymbalsmith Paul Francis, which has led the drummer to take three prototype cymbals on the road, ones that he finds similar to his old Ks, yet with an "open book" aspect he finds intriguing. During the factory visit, at one point Jeff lamented that if one particular bell were slightly altered, he'd be in heaven. Without batting an eye, Paul brought out a worn hammer, sat Jeff at an anvil, and directed, while Jeff clobbered out the bell of his dreams. For a guy who has spent so many years avoiding all that is modern, this act speaks volumes.

MD spoke to Jeff in person and by phone on several occasions. On the last of these chats, we went back to square one to seek an admission about an early influence.

T. Bruce Wittet

MD: You're from the San Francisco area—Santa Cruz. That would place you near Eddie Marshall's home ground. Did I read somewhere that you studied with him? I ask because I'm a Marshall fan going back to the [seminal pre-Bitches Brew] fusion band The Fourth Way.

Jeff: There was a connection. I went to a lesson with him. He was instrumental in my realizing how the drums can be played with four limbs. I saw the independence of his limbs at work. And at that time he had a bit of Tony Williams in his playing, and I was coming from a Tony stage.

Eddie was an excellent teacher. He had the thing where he'd hit the cymbal right out of a flam on the snare, a sort of flam-crash, flam-bash! It was killing me, as were some of his other licks, like snare and hi-hat patterns.

MD: Eddie was a composer, and he'd play with his hands, with mallets, and maybe simultaneously play melodic lines on a recorder.

Jeff: He'd always be imagining the perfect part, or what he could add to the music. Shelly Manne was similar. Donald Bailey was one of the most fearless musicians around. No one played the way he played. He kind of distilled something funky and flat-out. Kenny Clarke had some of that, and Billy Higgins also.

Andrew Lepley

"You refine and finesse, you explore, and, if you're eloquent and clear, you'll run with those beautiful cats."

MD: I remember Donald's bass drum being really fat.

Jeff: From what I saw, he used this big ol' fluffy bass drum beater. The "shape" of his groove was fearless and relentless. Someone said it was like looking into a clothes dryer, where the stuff's tumbling around, and maybe a sneaker jumps past the window. Things are turbulent, but the hole in the middle is his groove. He gives the illusion of playing so many parts; it goes back to that idea of playing compositionally.

MD: In the area of more contemporary ride beats, as opposed to, say, Philly Joe, whose ride beat was more conventional....

Jeff: Why do you say that? That's curious to me, that you would say his beat was conventional.

MD: Maybe because he played a more conventional dotted ride beat, whereas you seem to be coming from a more squared-off, maybe even 8th-note-ride feel.

Jeff: To me, what you're saying doesn't define "modern." Almost every different "shape" of the quarter-note, 8th-note, or triplet helps define the beat. If Philly Joe's shape comes out a certain way in his ride beat, I don't necessarily think it's a definition for what is conventional. There are dangers in making the assumption that because it's part of a past tradition that it isn't contemporary. But I do think that the "codes" that are played—little functional phrases—do change with time. Tony, for one, really mixed it up.

Maybe modernity is the incorporation of many things into one's playing. You've got somebody like Billy Hart, or like Jack DeJohnette, who play a rock beat, and they're able to shed their skin. Jack can play a one-drop or bossa nova; he can access a lot of ways of grooving. If he plays rock, you can kind of tell he's a jazz player, but you can tell he's referring to the true rock.

One thing that's going on today is this mix of cultures; it's way out the window, man. Cats are coming from India and rocking the joint. Cuba continues crossing the waters with their cultural musical growth. Today it's diversity that is the thing.

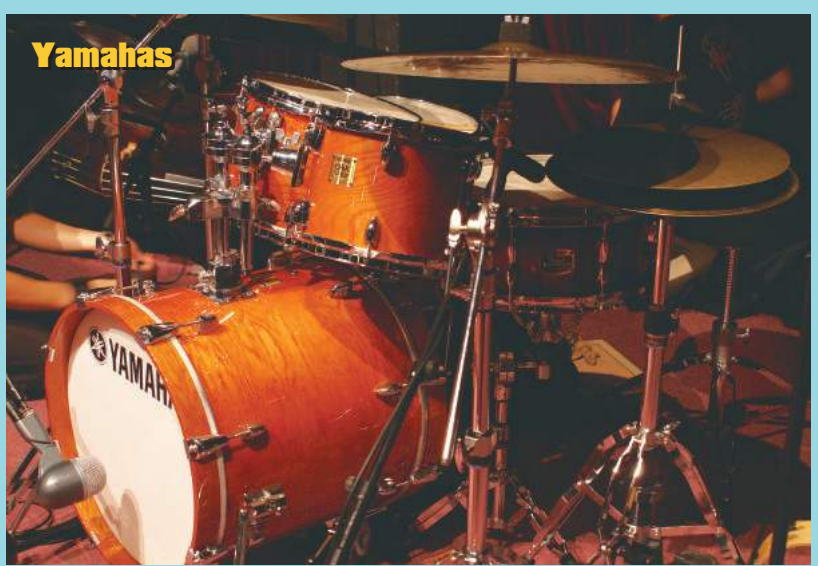
My thing has always been digging on another culture's "drum way," their way of playing drums. Drums have a "behavior" in each culture. Take music from South America: Each indigenous population has a particular

Jeff's Drums

Drums: Camco (Oaklawn & Chanute finish) or Yamaha Oak Custom
(in same sizes as Camcos)
A. 5x14 snare (Craviotto Lake Superior model)
B. 9x10 tom (made by DW to match Camcos)
C. 8x12 tom
D. 14x14 floor tom
E. 16x16 floor tom
F. 14x18 bass drum (or 14x20)

Cymbals: various
1. 13" Zildjian old K over 14" Paiste Sound Creation hats
2. 18" old K
3. 20" Zildjian K Constantinople ride (4 lbs., with bell copied from an old Turkish K)
4. 20" old K (with rivets)
5. 22" Zildjian K Constantinople ride (5 lbs, 2 oz, with bell copied from an old Turkish K)

Hardware: twenty-year-old Yamaha stands, DW 5000 bass drum pedal
Heads: Remo Fiberskyns on all drums
(real calfskin heads on snare and bass drum when possible)
Sticks: Vic Firth Steve Jordan or Cappella JC Heritage model, Regal Tip retractable brushes



drum. In Argentina, maybe it' s not a drum per se but these bolos, these two balls on a string that the gauchos use to catch cows. These behaviors are intriguing to me. I want to get right to the premier level and discover the code: Where does the "weight" of the groove lie? You have a low tone. Where does it tend to fit? In a tango, for example, it' s on 1, the "&" of 2, and on 4. Sometimes they' ll lay it on the "&" of 1; it depends.

MD: What drums in a drumset are most significant in conveying this weight?

Jeff: The bass drum and the snare drum. You' ve got the low of the bass drum and the high of the snare drum, and then a soprano voice with your hand striking the snare and muffling it—a more muted sound. A cross-stick has a super-high sound, and you can lay the stick across the drum with your left hand and hit the stick with your right hand. There' s this "game" of where the low tone, or the weight, rests.

I don' t think any beats that you play when you tackle, say, Argentine rhythms, are written out in any book. Certainly they' ll write out a "tango," but it' s not the tango you' re playing. It' s been pared down to a certain pattern. But the tango is not a pattern. It' s an animal with a behavior, it' s a tonal order. Where the tones are placed is vital.

When we play a tango with Guillermo Klein, it' s got these moments of accelerando and retardando, and there are these big accents. It' s not static. In a way, everything Guillermo writes is put through some sort of Argentine "filter." You can negotiate the music in a variety of ways, providing this filter is still in place.

MD: When you were young, did you have similar revelations about keys to playing jazz drumset?

Jeff: I approached drumset in a similar way. You can imagine one guy playing bass drum, maybe with a coat hanger attached and a little cymbal hanging, and then you' ve got a guy with a snare drum and a wood block attached. What a pull you get from those two bodies playing two separate things! If you take that awareness over to the drumset, you can duplicate that stretch or tug between the two players: That was one revelation to me. This bass drum is its own instrument, same with the snare drum.

If you look at the history of drums, it' s all ensemble work—it' s section work and interdependent. Having that revelation in your head when you' re behind the drumset..to me, that' s independence. If one limb plays like one person, with all the inflections and nuances, that' s the thing—or the listener feeling as if two people are playing.

There' s something that really helped me in playing the drumset: For the longest time, I was putting my time, my sense of keeping time, at the

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tip of my right stick. That was the "dot" that was matching up with the metronomic time: tick, tock, tick, tock. I was giving the entire responsibility for this to my right hand for the pinpointing of exactly where the time lay. It was ride cymbal–driven, you could say.

But then I started playing four on the floor [on bass drum] because Lou Donaldson made me do that. I sucked. After the tour I came back home and practiced and played that way. And I hadn't realized that I was looking at time in the sense of "matching the dots."

My playing of the bass drum progressed to where the dots totally disappeared and I had this huge horizon line at the end of an ocean. I felt as if anything could fall on that huge horizon line but still it would be in time! I became aware that there's a lower half of the body that works in concert with the upper portion. Playing bass drum on all four beats led to this huge revelation.

I'm not saying you have to play four on the floor. But the feeling you gain when doing that, being able to do that, leads to the revelation that a wide sense of time sits right in your center. It's a great fulcrum, or perspective, from which to view the drums. It took me some time to get this going and make it feel natural. You can feather the bass drum, or you can internalize that feeling, but there is no question where the time sits.

I play four on the floor in ballads, sometimes with a little more weight, say, on 2 and 4. And if you haven't seen me do that, then definitely know that I'm feeling it internally; it's definitely going on.

MD: Is there a relationship between the size of the bass drum and the ability to make that four-on-the-floor pulse convincing?

Jeff: I think it's more the length of the tone and whether or not that gets in the way. If you take an 18" tuned high, that'll sit above the acoustic bass, whereas a 20" will be in the lower end. It could even be in the sub-low area, and therefore could present a problem for the bass.

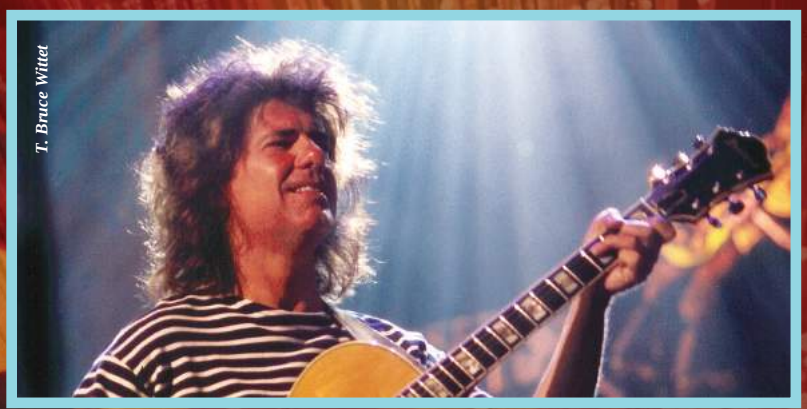
At any rate, because I love having tone in my drums, I've always used Fiberskyn heads, except for my bass drum and snare drum. I have real calfskins on those. When you've

Metheny On Ballard

"I've admired Jeff Ballard from a distance for years," says guitar great Pat Metheny. "Like many people, I was first introduced to Jeff through his work with Chick Corea. Jeff immediately struck me as a new member in that rare fraternity of drummers in improvised music who have a stylistic range that allows nearly anything to be possible.

"If the music requires a backbeat, Jeff can offer that—but with the wisdom and depth that he brings to the table as a great jazz drummer. With him you can play totally free, really loud, really soft, really burning, or really sparsely. And it will *all* be happening. And to add to all of that, he has found a unique and identifiable touch and sound that is all his own.

"When Brad [Mehldau] and I were planning this record, the thought of playing with Jeff was really exciting to me. I've been lucky to have played with many of the best drummers in the jazz world, but somehow Jeff and I had never had the occasion to get together. The recording was an absolute pleasure, and the tour that we are on now is a special one. Jeff's a great guy, too, which counts for a lot!"


T. Bruce Wittet

seen me, mostly it's been calfskin, unless it's a kit du jour. Lately I've been bringing Fiberskyns on the road so that I get my sound even on rental drumkits.

MD: What is it that you like about those heads?

Jeff: It's the tone and the control of the pitch you get; also the control of the length of the note. If there's tone, I can "speak" well with a drum, whereas if there's not a lot of tone, it's simply percussion. I can make melodic lines that spell out rhythms for the listener.

The drums I've been using are old maple Camcos from the '60s. The tone has a lot of "skin" in it. The Fiberskyns give me a skin feel and sound. And the effect of these drums is as if they're hitting you in the chest. There are other tones vibrating around in those drums as well, so I try and make those overtones sonorous or harmonious too.

MD: When you moved to New York, you used a 20" bass drum, as opposed to the fashionable 18". Why was that?

Jeff: That was the only drum I owned! I was coming out of Ray Charles' band with a 20" bass drum, 10" and 12" toms, and a 14x14 floor tom. I didn't really feel the need to get that jazzy 18" bass drum sound. That came out with Chick Corea.

I don't use monitors, or I might have a little piano in the monitor, so I'm hearing the real sound on stage. My own sound isn't artificially loud or full of overtones. I wanted a higher tone for the bass drum so it would fit well in the group. With Chick, there was an element of groove, but not so much that I needed a big 20" drum groove. His music has a lighter, jazzier sound. I was fortunate to find an 18" Camco through Donn Bennett's shop in Seattle.

I don't have any muffling on the drums. I have a felt strip on the front head of the bass drum, and the only other muffling might be between the bass drum pedal and the batter head—sort of like a little terrycloth towel. That way I can lengthen or shorten the note depending on the room.

MD: I was a little surprised by your tuning on the Chick Corea DVD Rendezvous In New York. Your drums seemed a little higher than I've come to expect.

Jeff: Since then I've definitely lowered the pitch to get big, lower tones rather than high, ringy ones. The acoustic bass is such a big sound that I prefer to stay away, to avoid being in the same range. So I've lowered the drums a little bit, but I'm also controlling the

length of note on the toms with the stick, which I wasn' t doing so much before. If I perceive the floor tom as being too close to Larry' s sound, I leave the stick on that tom to avoid clouding what he' s doing.

MD: Let' s talk about your grip, which I feel is unique. Sometimes, it' s as if there' s no stick there and you' re playing hand drums—it' s so relaxed. Other times, I look at your right hand and your index finger is extended an inch "north" of the fulcrum. It makes me think of Tony Williams.

Jeff: But that first finger moves around, and it changes the sound. It' s got an attitude to it. I saw a clinic with Tony in California and he said the same thing. He held the stick with traditional grip in the left hand for a certain attitude; for another attitude he held it in another way. There was always an attitude. I took that to heart.

When it' s matched grip, the first finger and thumb act as a pivot point, while those last few fingers are like "the engine." No matter which way the stick is moving, you open your fingers and close them, and they stay with the stick. You get total control over the stick because you' re always touching it. You strike the drum, the stick hits, and the rebound is pushing the back half of the stick out. You are opening your fingers at the exact moment, so that you' re not restricting the stick in any way—but your fingers are still attached to the stick. They open, and then snap, they close.

The attitudinal aspect is important. When I' m playing a backbeat with traditional grip, it has a different kind of pocket.

MD: When you say "backbeat," it certainly doesn' t apply to, say, Brad Mehldau.

Jeff: I' d say that the Joshua Redman gig is more of a backbeat gig. It' s a much more physically demanding gig. It' s a strong culture and a certain kind of intensity, and I have to enter it with a certain kind of weight.

I feel with Brad I can just throw down my sticks on the drums, and as long as I wanted to hit the drum like that, it' s all cool. I' m free to experiment. In this group, I' ve grown so much playing with Brad and Larry [Grenadier, bass]. I' ve known Larry for twenty years, and he' s taught me enormously. He' s a young guy with an old guy growing inside of him; he' s a wise cat. And we have the band Fly together along with Mark Turner. It' s a brotherhood feeling.

When I was with Chick, he had a beautiful idea of making a record of everybody in the band, a compilation of everybody' s material. We all had a song or two on there, except me because I didn' t have a record out. So Chick gave me enough money to record with Mark and Larry, which is something I' d wanted to do. It felt great.

A little detail for the cats: I recorded Fly with Coles ribbon microphones as overheads, as opposed to condenser mic' s. The Coles captured the sound of the cymbals the way I hear them, the "body" of the cymbal. It' s the best drum sound I' ve ever had. We recorded in the same room, it was our own gear, and the songwriting was collaborative. Fly is a true collective.

Chick spent a week at a club, with all these things going on, and it' s all on Chick Corea New Trio: Rendezvous In New York—a great DVD. We got to reunite our group, Origin, with Chick.

MD: Given your love for the Camcos, what led you to Yamaha?

Jeff: My first real drumset was a Yamaha. Then when playing with Chick, I met Hagi [retired Yamaha guru drum designer Takashi "Hagi" Hagiwara], and that began the relationship. They came to me a few times and asked what I was thinking and liking, and I was impressed by that. I told them that I would like to begin a working relationship with them.

To me, Yamaha are the high-end crafters of our day. If there' s a new idea from the compa-

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Ballard On The Fly

HIS BEST RECORDINGS:

Artist	Album
Fly	Fly
Chick Corea	The New Trio: Rendezvous In New York (DVD)
Kurt Rosenwinkel	The Next Step
Kurt Rosenwinkel	Enemies Of Change
Joshua Redman	Momentum
Avishai Cohen	Adama
Avishai Cohen	Devotion
Brad Mehldau	Day Is Done
Matt Penman	The Unquiet
Guillermo Klein	Los Gauchos, Vol. 2
Ben Allison	Medicine Wheel
Frank Kimbrough	Chant
Eli Degibiri	In The Beginning
Reid Anderson	Abolish Bad Architecture
Metheny Mehldau	Metheny Mehldau

HIS FAVORITES:

Artist	Album	Drummer
Dave Brubeck	Time Further Out	Joe Morello
Chicago	Chicago III	Danny Seraphine
Frank Sinatra	Sinatra At The Sands	Sonny Payne
Miles Davis	Four And More	Tony Williams
John Coltrane	Crescent	Elvin Jones
Ornette Coleman	Tomorrow Is The Question	Ed Blackwell
Freddie Hubbard	Super Blue	Jack DeJohnette
Chick Corea	Friends	Steve Gadd
Billy Hart	Enchance	Billy Hart
Dave Liebman	Pendulum	Al Foster
Ed Blackwell	Old And New Dreams	Ed Blackwell
Pat Metheny	Rejoicing	Billy Higgins
Pat Metheny	80/81	Jack DeJohnette
Chick Corea	Now He Sings, Now He Sobs	Roy Haynes
Weather Report	Domino Theory	Omar Hakim
Marcus Miller	Jamaica Boys	Lenny White
Iraquere	Best Of Iraquere	Enrique Pla
Jimi Hendrix	Axis: Bold As Love	Mitch Mitchell

ny, it' s always to assist the player. That was one reason. The other reason was the oak shells I' ve been playing. It' s back to that tone we' re talking about. At one point, I did find that perhaps there was too much of a tone—a pitch that might dominate the tonality of the song. I don' t want to have to compensate for that—always having to baby-sit the drums when they' re rowdy. I just want to play. So I have a custom oak kit coming, and they' re changing the bearing edges, rounding them to put more wood against the head.

MD: What about the snare drum? You' ve become so attached to your Craviotto.

Jeff: If Yamaha is into searching around, which is my impression, I' d really like to find something with them. That was a sort of " holding back" issue for me before, that Craviotto snare drum. You cannot replace a seven hundred–year old shell from the bottom of Lake Superior with something a week old. I' m sure if they could make me a single-ply oak or maybe rosewood shell, they' d get it. I have confidence in their abilities.

MD: Tell us how you began to incorporate Bill Stewart' s modern K, the Zildjian K Complex ride, into your traditional K setup.

Jeff: After I cracked my favorite ride cymbal—and realized it has a finite lifespan—Nodar fixed it again. But I realized I' d need some cymbals to take care of my various other demands. I called up Bill Stewart and he told me to come over. He was playing a whole bunch of cymbals that he' d made through Zildjian. They were all prototypes, but they were pretty much the same breed of cymbal. I picked up a couple and I couldn' t decide between them, and he said, " Go ahead, take them both and bring back the one you don' t like as much." They' re really bizarre but beautiful: trashy, a little gongy, but with an incredible little " tip," and there' s beauty in the body.

Now I' m working with Paul Francis at Zildjian and he' s had me hammering cymbals myself, adjusting bell heights, and taking the first steps toward copying my old K. It' s going

really well, so well that I' m bringing three cymbals on the road with Metheny/Mehldau.

MD: How do you bring a shiny new cymbal into a collection of forty year–old cymbals that are turning brown?

Jeff: With the Bill Stewart cymbal, I rubbed stuff on it and spit on it. If I had anything dirty in my hand, I' d wipe it on that cymbal. I got it looking dirty pretty quickly. You hear stories of guys burying their cymbals, but I didn' t go that far. In California, bats would get into our garage, so I' d have this bat shit on the cymbals!

As for integrating old and modern cymbals, with Josh I use 14" Paiste Sound Creation hats and a bigger, thicker crash, basically so I can lay into it. Normally with Brad I use an old 13" K for the top hat and the 14" Sound Creation on the bottom. I' ve cracked my 18" K along the bell by hitting it hard on that gig.

I traded through Nodar for a heavier 22" old K that I can use in some circumstances, including the Metheny/Mehldau tour. It' s thicker and has a heavier bell, but it' s still " old K world."

MD: Your old Turkish main ride cymbal is really atypical, what with rivets halfway between the bell and edge.

Jeff: That cymbal was a gift from Kenny Wollesen. It' s got a great " kiss" to the attack—a really warm, woody stick click. A good distance below that attack is the wash. This particular cymbal is dark and also dry. It' s also thin and I can control it easily. The tip, shank, and butt end of the stick all pull out different tones. I' ve got these rivets to make up for the incredible dryness.

MD: How did the recording process differ between the Metheny Mehldau Quartet and Fly albums?

Jeff: Basically, it was the same, but because of the difference in instrumentation with Fly, we were able to record with all of us in the same room. One difference with Pat' s album was that we were rehearsing his tunes. Pat did send a CD and charts, which were sketches of the tunes, so when we went in, we got the tunes straight, set the form, and cut them in one or two takes.

MD: You must have an incredible memory. I don' t think I' ve ever seen you read more than a few measures of music live. You might cast your eyes briefly on a chart.

Jeff: Half of it is how you learn the tune. Like with Pat, we could suss it out at home with the charts. Some of the tunes were harder to remember, but there were no tricky stops or weird bars. I made notes to myself.

MD: We' re dealing with drastically different personalities: Pat Metheny and Brad Mehldau. Did each express to you their respective requirements in the studio?

Jeff: Not at all. At this point in the game, I don' t have to play like that or like this. I checked out the sketches of the tunes but had absolute freedom to add to and interpret them. Occasionally we' d do something over and try a different approach, but it wasn' t dictatorial. Pat' s tunes were definitely written with my playing in mind, and the tunes felt easy for me to play. I think he' s an amazing cat. He can see how Brad, Larry, and I play, put us together, and put his fingerprint on it, providing us with space to emerge musically.

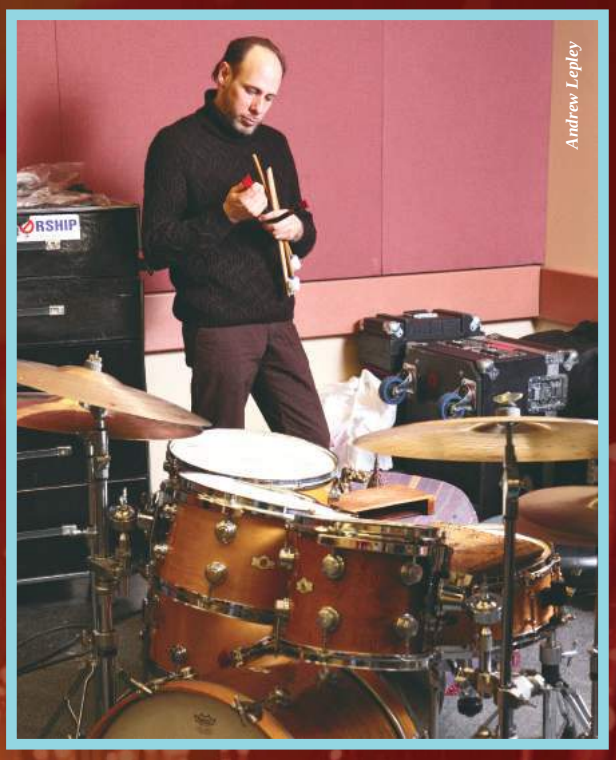
When I came in, I knew Pat' s music, having grown up on him. But I have no preconceived approach; it' s all dictated by the tune. On this album there' s a little more carpet-laying, a little more groove playing, than with other groups. There are tunes, though, where I' m not relegated to any particular role. This band has a lot of potential. There are a lot of things we can do, from Bela Bartok to Roy Haynes to Robbie Robertson. This book can grow.

MD: Pat has played with a lot of drummers, from Danny Gottlieb to Antonio Sanchez, and he seems to always ask for flat rides. Did he make any similar request to you?

Jeff: No. Whatever I brought in, such as a dif-

Thoughts On Practicing

by Jeff Ballard



Andrew Lepley

When it comes to practicing, I go after that which is physically problematic for me. I'd like to stress maintaining a high awareness of touch and sound. When you practice, at all times try to pull the best sound you can out of the drum or cymbal. And playing very slowly will give you the time to digest all kinds of information. Again, be sure to *practice slowly*. It really helps.

For the last couple of years I've been practicing mostly what I think of as basic elements of getting around the drumset. Single-stroke triplets between two hands while playing four quarter notes on the bass drum, 2 and 4 on the hi-hat (or quarters on the hi-hat and bass drum together; or dotted quarters on the bass drum while playing half notes on 1 and 3 with the hat; or the reverse of that; or only playing upbeats with either foot or both; etc.), slowly trying as many different combinations with the feet as I can think of.

Playing slowly with my hands, I'll move around the drums switching from tom to tom to floor tom to snare. I'll slowly change directions—changing when (on which beat) I switch drums, teaching the body what it feels like when you move and where you move to. Your muscles are gaining a memory, or experience, of what it feels like to play (or move to) a tone. It's somewhat like imprinting a memory of time and place with movement and sound inside you.

I do all of this work with single strokes between my hands while my feet keep an ostinato. The practice is about getting to really know how each hand and foot interacts with the other. In this particular exercise I feel that keeping the integrity of the singles in triplet form gives the line a particular force behind it. It's a force of alternation. One should be observing the constant shifting and balancing relationship between both sides, right and left.

Pace of practice is important. While playing the above, I usually play in big phrases of eight, twelve, or sixteen bars, creating melodies gradually and thematically. For example, when playing the above exercise, I'll accent or change drums on the second triplet (my theme) with the right hand. Then I'll look for a timely and easy moment to start in with the left hand accenting or changing a drum on its second triplet.

Oftentimes I'll play something with my left hand, which is like a mirror (another theme) of what I'm playing with my right, trying to investigate both sides. Right away you may hear some melody calling you. Play it. But make it stay within the idea you're practicing. Stay within both themes. Working that second triplet in both hands, you're exploring and storing up how it feels physically. Then, after some days or months, maybe the left foot, for example, starts playing a different part…and the box opens more.

The above is admittedly basic, but if you put a lot of mind and focus to it, it isn't so simple.

It seems to me that we're in a time when rhythmic sophistication is ripe and ready to come back to the fore of music. Melody and harmony have gone beyond and back and still continue their search. But now it's time, again, for time to be explored more. Practice on!

ferent drum for one tune, was my decision. It was like he hired me to play the way I played.

MD: This band will keep you on the road for a year or so.

Jeff: There' ll be some breaks. It' s basically three chunks of time with six weeks off. Fly is going to get in there and record during one of the breaks.

MD: People are unanimous in their praise of your style, sound, and the visual aspect. Are you aware that you' re considered " the next big thing" ?

Jeff: No, not at all. I' m very surprised. I' m not surprised that people will be attracted, say, to certain philosophies or the acrobatics!

MD: Young guys lament that they move to New York and do their forty-dollar gigs, play Smalls, but never seem to break out as you' ve done.

Jeff: Well, it took me about five years to get a gig traveling around. Even that came from working on a jazz cruise ship. Being in New York and sticking it out is more than half the battle.

I' m happy to be doing this with Pat, Brad, Larry, Mark, Guillermo, Avishai, Ben Allison, and Chick. I' d really like to play with Joe Lovano, Kenny Baron, Cedar Walton, and, of course, Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter. There are so many guys I' d like to play with! The level of musicianship is knocking me out, and I want to grow more and more.

I feel I' m blessed. If you receive such a blessing, then the only thing you can do is give it the respect that it deserves. You refine and finesse, you explore, and, if you' re eloquent and clear, you' ll run with those beautiful cats.

MD: Do you feel there are major drum techniques left for you to work on?

Jeff: If I could have known how profound it was to learn how to do some of the most basic things on drums, I would have learned them long ago.

MD: Sounds like that quote, " If I' d known I was going to live so long, I would have taken better care of myself!"

Jeff: [laughs] Exactly, man! I never thought I' d be playing anything super-hip until I was at least fifty. So it' s catch-up: I' ve got seven more years. But I feel that in the last two years I' ve grown more than at any other time. To make something really feel good and make it really heavy and mean something—now I' m really digging in with my maturity. Even if I could start over, I probably wouldn' t have had the same maturity to fly with what I' m feeling and thinking.

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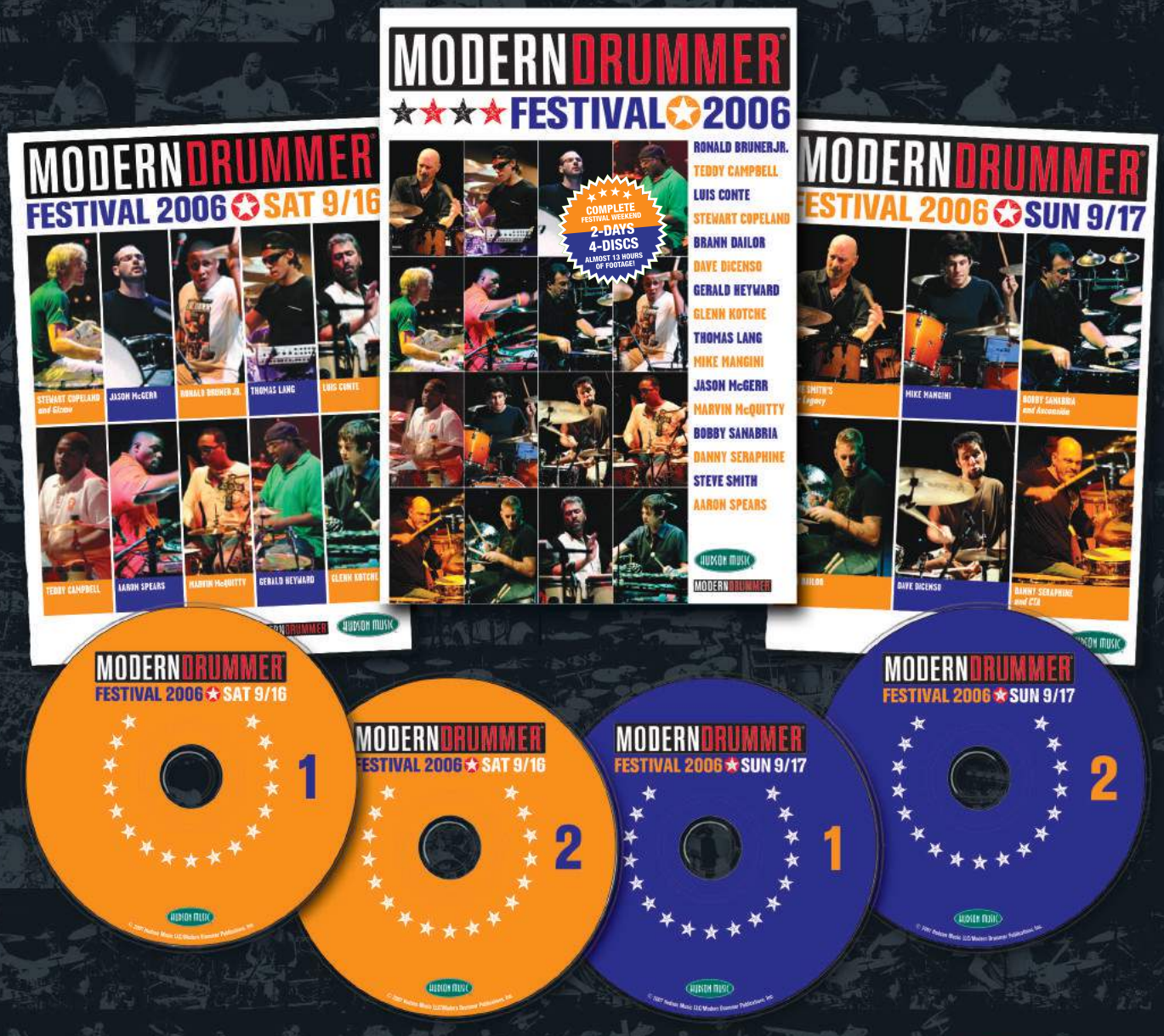

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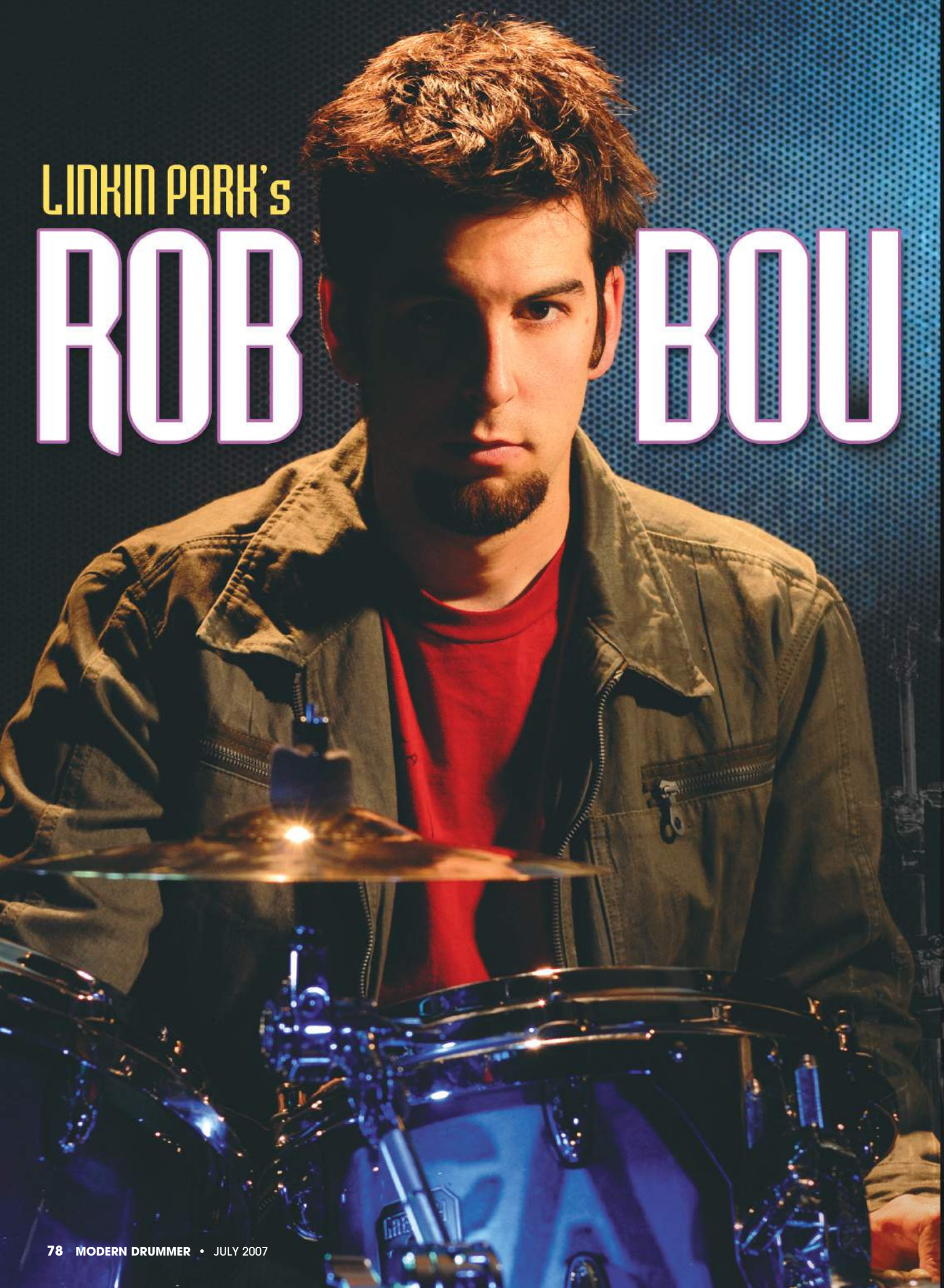


LINKIN PARK'S ROB BOU

Story by Ken Micallef • Photos by Alex Solca

RDON midnight confessions

Back in 1999, Rob Bourdon was just another drummer in LA, playing with his band Linkin Park, doing the rounds of clubs, and working on his loops, beats, and pieces. Fast forward eight years: Bourdon is now one of the most successful drummers in the world, fans clamor for a glimpse of his handsome visage, and his rap-rock records with Linkin Park have sold over forty million units. And it seems that he's just getting warmed up. How has success changed the mild-mannered Rob Bourdon?

"I am definitely grateful to be able to play music as a career and to support myself playing drums," he says from his LA home. "I feel a great sense of accomplishment in being able to do that, because it was a life's dream for me to be able to focus on writing music and playing drums and not have to worry about anything else. It's through the success of our records that I've been able to really focus on that as my main purpose in life."

For their new studio album, *Minutes To Midnight*, Linkin Park went back to basics. Enlisting producer Rick Rubin (U2, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Run DMC), the band pared back the dependence on loops and machines that had dominated their previous albums *Hybrid Theory* and *Meteora* and generally attempted to groove like they'd never grooved before. The result is a more natural-sounding record that at times recalls U2 and Pink Floyd. The Rob Bourdon of *Minutes To Midnight* sounds more natural as well, his reliance on computer editing software taking a back seat to grooves that flow with more visceral intent, and less focus on syncing with the loops of Linkin Park's DJ and mastermind, Mike Shinoda.

An adherent of using Pro Tools as a way to outline beats in the songwriting process, Bourdon is also inspired by the work of drummers like Carter Beauford and Army Of Anyone's Ray Luzier. While Bourdon uses technology as impetus in building the perfect beat, he's also all about a serious practice regimen involving single-stroke rolls, paradiddles, and various coordination exercises. His perseverance pays off on new songs like "The Little Things Give You Away," where he creates one of his most complex parts to date, the subtle funk of "What I've Done," as well as the martial allusions of "Hands Held High."

A rap-rocker reborn? Not quite. But by embracing a more traditional songwriting approach, coupled with a feverish practice routine, Bourdon proves there is life after superstardom, globetrotting tours, and corporate rock domination. *Minutes To Midnight* chronicles the growth and evolution of Linkin Park…and Rob Bourdon.

MD: Linkin Park has sold over forty million albums. What' s the craziest thing you' ve done with your cash?
Rob: The craziest thing? To be honest, I haven' t done anything that crazy. I bought a house, which allowed me to set up a home studio. I actually just finished it. In the past I always lived in an apartment. I would have to drive to my drum room to practice. So it' s great now that I have a home studio so I can go downstairs, walk into my soundproof room, and practice drums right at home.
MD: You also have a Pro Tools rig there?
Rob: I have a full Pro Tools setup in there and all my Gretsch drums miked up, so whenever I feel like writing or if I' m inspired and want to record an idea, I can turn everything on and start working.
MD: Along with the success, there must be a lot of pressure in being part of such a huge act. Is there a downside?
Rob: There' s definitely pressure to write creative parts and really nail stuff live. There are a lot of people watching us and looking to see what we do next and what type of music we' ll play. But that pressure actually ends up being positive.

In the beginning there was the pressure of wanting to perform well so we could gain fans and eventually impress a label to sign us. And then after we were signed, it was more about continuing to grow musically and become better performers. Now it' s more about the pressure that comes with success. As long as we take it in a positive way and use the pressure to better ourselves as musicians and performers, then it will all work out for the best.

New Ways To Count To Twelve

MD: For the new album, Minutes To Midnight, it was reported that the band wrote in new ways, using banjo, Mellotron, and marimba. How did that affect your drumming approach?
Rob: In the past we really didn' t spend that much time in the recording studio. We spent a lot of time prior to the recording studio, planning out exactly what we were going to record. Being in a successful band afforded us the opportunity to spend some real time in the studio and try out stuff that we wouldn' t have otherwise.
MD: How did that affect your drumming specifically?
Rob: The experimentation you' re talking about is in the song " Shadow Of The Day," where we tried out a bunch of different elements in the beginning, but the drums had already been laid down. A lot of the experimental instrumentation that happened occurred after the drum tracks were already established, or at least when there was a place holder down.
MD: I' ve read that you used a Roland 808 on some tracks. Were you triggering that, or was that part of Mike Shinoda' s programs?
Rob: Mike comes up with a lot of the programmed

parts. On about half of that stuff, we worked together to coordinate the live drums with the programmed drums. That's something that definitely influences how I write my live parts.

There's a lot more going on in our rhythm section, in that we have a DJ and a lot of programmed drums. It forces me at times to play fewer notes to leave room for all of that stuff to work together. Otherwise it can sound way too cluttered.

MD: The band's rapper, Chester Bennington, described the song "Bleed It Out" as having "Motown drums." Could you describe the drums on that song?

Rob: For that track we actually used a different kit than on most of the record. We used a really small drumset and didn't mike all of it, we just had a couple room mics set up. We recorded as close as possible to how they used to record at Motown. The song has a real driving, straightforward beat behind it, which was a totally different approach from how we began working on the song. That was one of the things we experimented with in the studio. I tried a lot of different drum patterns and drum sounds that wouldn't necessarily go with the traditional rock record. It ended up sounding great and bringing a new life to the song.

MD: The drums are rawer-sounding in general on Minutes To Midnight. Does that mean less programming, less triggering?

Rob: In the past, we usually got the drum sounds down in one day. We would just set up and go through drum sounds, and when we found one we liked, we would stick with it and that would be the drum sound for the entire record. We then would do a lot of programming on top of the drumming so that it would have a consistent sound. It sounded more produced.

We really spent a lot of time on the drums on this record. There were eight to ten days of going through different snare drums. All of the extra time and focus ended up giving a lot more life to the drums. This record definitely sounds more live.

MD: Of the tracks I heard, there seemed to be more room sound in each. Were the drums actually recorded in a big room, or are those digital reverb effects?

Rob: We recorded at the Laurel Canyon studio where Rick Rubin works a lot. That's where The Red Hot Chili Peppers recorded Stadium Arcadium and Blood Sugar Sex Magik. Bugsy Siegel used to live there, and the house had a tunnel where Harry Houdini would cross through in the middle of the night. All of the gear had to be rented and brought in, because it's not a professional studio. We tracked the drums in what used to be the main living room, which is a big room. We also put some room mics in the entryway; that really gave it a big room sound.

MD: If there was one thing you didn't like about your drumming on the first two studio albums, what would that be?

Rob: I don't know if there's anything I didn't like. When I first played Hybrid Theory, I sometimes felt like the drumming was too straightforward and too simple. But that wasn't because I didn't try stuff that was complicated; I played what I did because it ended up sounding right for the song. I did try playing some crazier fills and more complicated patterns, but when I did that it tended to take away from the focus of what was going on vocally.

A lot of listeners don't understand or know what's going on with the drums. Sometimes if the drum pattern is too complicated, it will give them a weird feeling. They don't know what it is, and they don't know that the drummer is overplaying. They just know that they don't like the song.

MD: Why did you consider "Easier To Run" to be the most difficult track from *Meteora*?

Rob: The difficult part of that track was not the playing, it was how I went about writing the drum part to that track. When I sit down to write a track, sometimes the parts are obvious and they come out really easily, and other times there are four or five different drum patterns that all sound good. I have to decide which one will make the song better and help support the vocals and everything else that's going on. On that track it was more challenging to find the right part, do something that was a little different, and make it work within the Linkin Park sound.

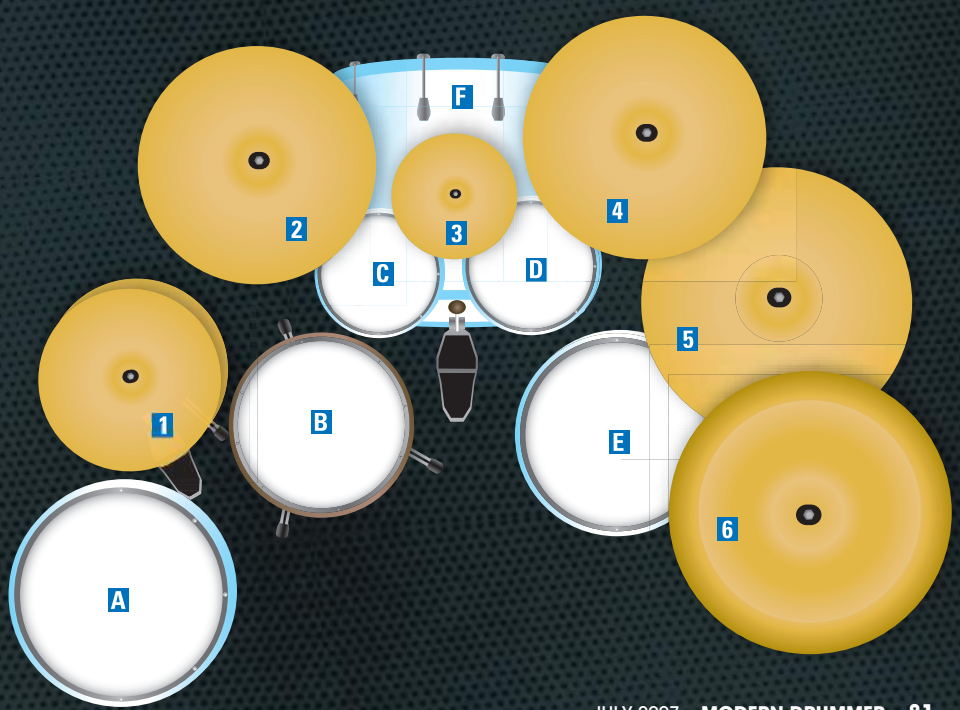
Overall, when I first started playing with these guys, I had a tendency to play more complicated patterns. In a sense I overplayed. From working with these guys, who are all great songwriters, I've been challenged to find the right part that best fits with the song, rather than coming up with the coolest drum part that I personally would like to listen to. It's looking at it from a songwriting approach

ROB's KIT

Drums: Gretsch USA Custom
- **A.** 16x18 floor tom
- **B.** 6½x14 snare
- **C.** 8x10 tom
- **D.** 9x12 tom
- **E.** 16x16 floor tom
- **F.** 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
- **1.** 14" A New Beat hi-hats
- **2.** 18" A Custom Projection crash
- **3.** 10" A Custom splash
- **4.** 19" A Custom Projection crash
- **5.** 20" A Custom Projection ride
- **6.** 20" Oriental China Trash

Electronics: Pintech Pad (to left of hi-hat)
Hardware: Gibraltar cage/drum supports
Heads: various Remo models
Sticks: Vater 5B (hickory with wood tip)
Footwear: Puma racing shoes



versus just writing fun drum parts to play.

Midnight In Bourdon' s Studio

MD: On what track from Minutes To Midnight are you the most fond of your drumming?

Rob: The track " The Little Things Give You Away" had the working title " Drum Song." It began with my drum pattern. There' s a breakdown where there' s a triplet-feel snare roll. I went into my practice room one day and was practicing triplets on the snare drum. I got into a trance, just adding accents in different spots. I was in one of those moods where I was loving playing the snare drum. I got into this roll and started recording it to a click track so I could then layer some music over it. That became the breakdown. I ended up putting down all of the drums and went back and added piano and strings. I wrote an entire track and passed that idea to Mike Shinoda, and that was the first seed of " The Little Things Give You Away."

MD: That' s a hip track. You' re playing a 6/8 pattern with alternating sticking between the hi-hat and ride cymbal.

Rob: I' m playing 16th-note triplets between the right hand on the ride and the left on the hi-hat, accenting the bell of the ride after each snare hit. A lot of people thought there were two drummers playing on the track because you can hear the ride and hi-hat simultaneously. I' m proud of that one.

MD: I heard that for Meteora you practiced up to eight hours a day in preparation. Was it the same process for Minutes To Midnight?

Rob: This was definitely a different approach than Meteora. When we did that album, we had all the music written. I spent eight hours a day rehearsing so that I knew exactly what I was going to do when I went into the studio.

Byron McMackin
Pennywise

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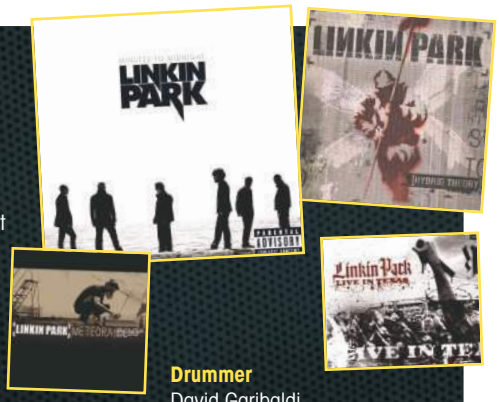


RECORDINGS

Artist	Album
Linkin Park	Minutes To Midnight
Linkin Park	Hybrid Theory
Linkin Park	Meteora
Linkin Park	Live In Texas

FAVORITES

Artist	Album	Drummer
Tower Of Power	Tower Of Power	David Garibaldi
Earth Wind & Fire	Gratitude	Fred White, Ralph Johnson
Sly & The Family Stone	Anthology	Greg Errico
Dave Matthews Band	Under The Table And Dreaming	Carter Beauford
Deftones	Adrenaline	Abe Cunningham
Aerosmith	Permanent Vacation	Joey Kramer
Faith No More	The Real Thing	Mike Bordin
Dizzy Gillespie	The Real Thing	Bernard Purdie
Steely Dan	Live In America	Dennis Chambers, Peter Erskine
Herbie Hancock	Headhunters	Harvey Mason
My Chemical Romance	The Black Parade	Bob Bryar

With this new record, we were in the recording studio a year before we finished recording.

MD: The six tracks I heard were pretty mellow. Are there harder-rocking songs?

Rob: There' s some heavier stuff on the record, some faster material that features heavier drumming. The more slamming songs include "No More Sorrow." That begins with a snare pattern, very rhythmic, which the whole band plays along to. It' s like a heavy march—you can almost imagine a big army marching to it.

The song "In Pieces" is fun to play. It' s more up-tempo. It has a little bit of a reggae part that made me think of Stewart Copeland when I wrote the drum part. I was listening to a lot of Police during that time.

MD: Did the band discuss the direction of the music before you started?

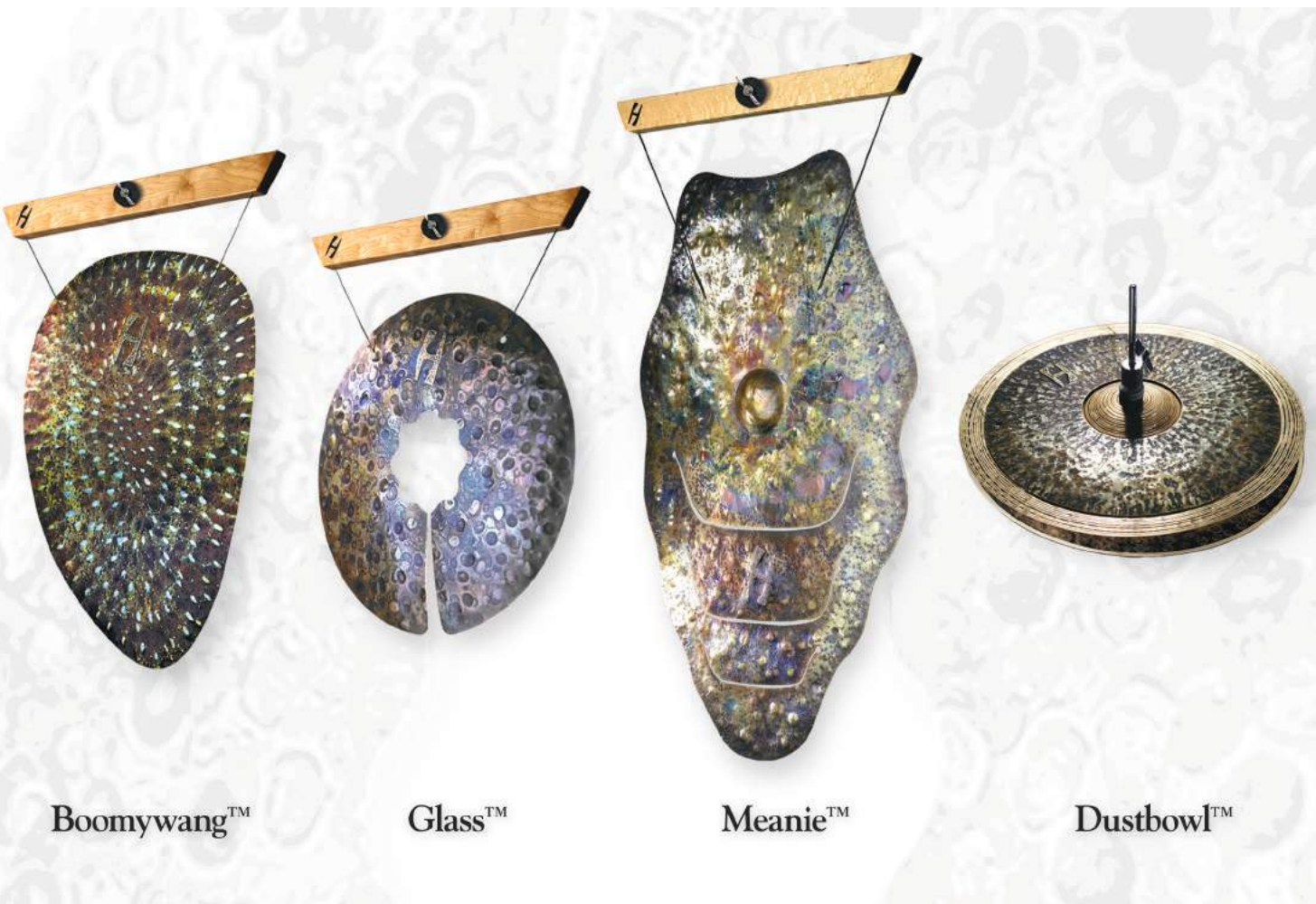
Rob: When we sat down with Rick Rubin, he asked what we were trying to accomplish. We said we wanted to do something outside of the box, something new and fresh. We didn' t want this record to be part three of a trilogy. We wanted to push ourselves as musicians. Rick asked us what we were inspired by, and told us to write down what Linkin Park is supposed to sound like. Once we came up with that list, we stuck to it. If a thought came to my mind while writing that sounded like Linkin Park, I tried not to follow it. That was easier said than done. But Rick was helpful in keeping us away from old patterns and pushing us into new territory.

MD: What was your reply to his question about inspiration?

Rob: At that moment I was into some pretty mellow music, like Death Cab For Cutie. I always listen to The Dave Matthews Band. Carter Beauford is one of my favorite drummers. What he does is the opposite of what I do, but I definitely appreciate it and I learned a lot from watching him.

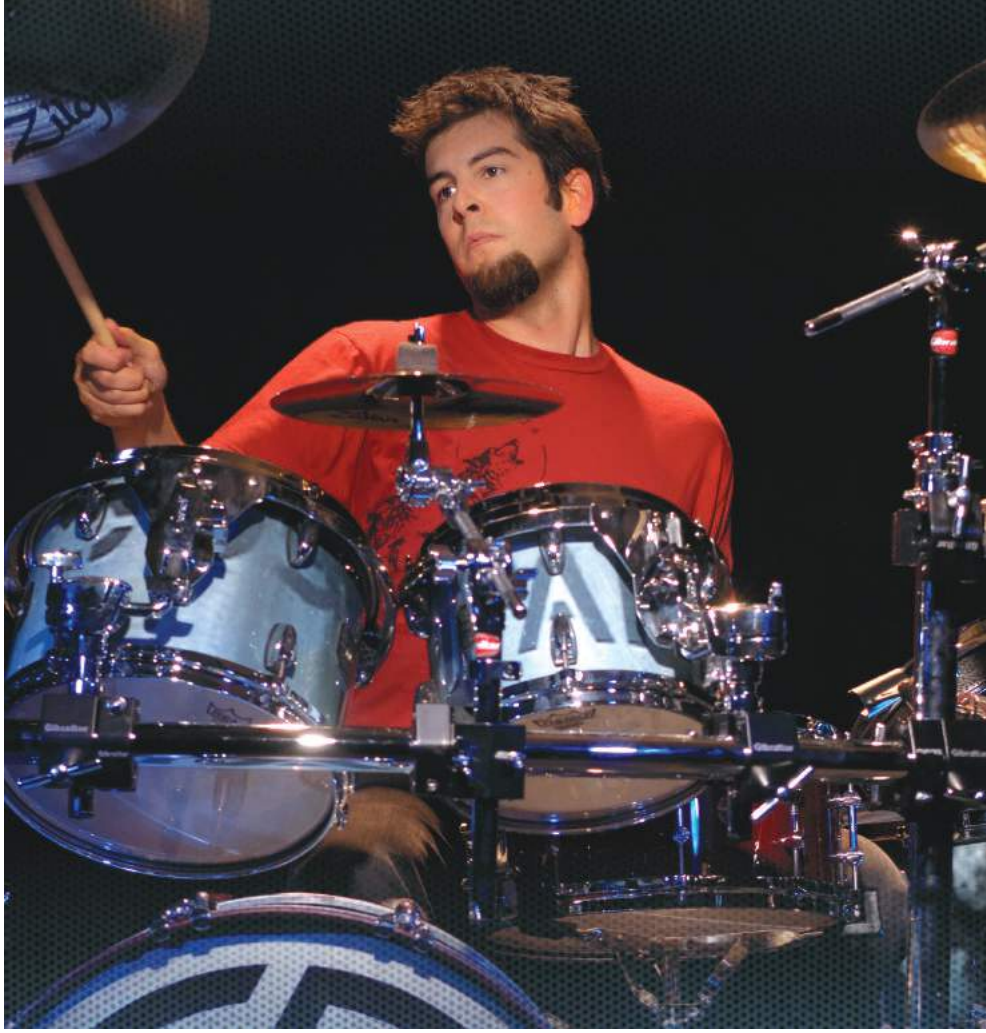
MD: In general, are we hearing complete live drum tracks on Linkin Park records, or do you go in and punch parts if necessary?

Rob: In the past it was about having it sound



perfect, to get the drums to sound dead on. There were loops going, so if we didn' t have those matched up perfectly with the drums, there would be flamming and it would sound really weird. In the past we would either grid the drums to the loops or, like on Meteora, we would put the loops on top of the live performances. A lot of tracks were a mix of different takes.

On this record there' s a lot of music that is just a single take. If there' s a little hiccup here or there, we would fix it, but it was really about the performance. That was something that Rick was incredible with; he was able to listen to a drum pass, and if there were things about it that he liked, he would say, " That' s the drum take." And the band would then track to that take. It was hard to hear what he was talking about in the moment—it was very subtle. But later it was obvious that certain things about that drum take were really cool.



Loop Gurus

MD: In general, when playing with a loop, how do you gauge where you' re going to lay the beat?

Rob: It depends on the feel of the song. In the past I had a tendency to play right on top of the loop. That can sound stiff. On this record

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we tracked live, so if I could hear that the vocalist was pushing a little bit, I would pull back. It was more of a feel thing. You don' t really get that feel unless you' re playing with the group. We lacked it in the past. It happened in live shows, but we never captured that on the records.

MD: So this time you tracked more drums live and the loops were added afterwards?

Rob: Yes. On " No More Sorrow," we wrote the drum part and the loop stuff was added afterwards. Then we went back and tracked live over the loop.

MD: And when you track live, is it to a click?

Rob: We tried it with and without the click. On " Qwerty," we tracked without a click, and Rick Rubin loved that drum take.

MD: We think of Rubin as getting a very natural sound.

Rob: Rick really has a thing for capturing a moment or capturing a performance. In the past that was always a challenge for me, because I was so used to playing with loops and the click that I got really good at laying it right down on top of the beat. I always wanted to perfect that, which is one way to play. But it can become challenging to play without that and just get into a groove.

When I began playing drums, I listened to a lot of funk, like Tower Of Power and Earth Wind & Fire, where it' s all about groove and feel. Working with the loops is a different approach. So in a way the process on this new record took me back to my roots. I stopped practicing to a click and started playing along with records that had a great feel. And Rick was great at listening to my playing and finding that take that had the groove. It opened my eyes and ears to listening for that again.

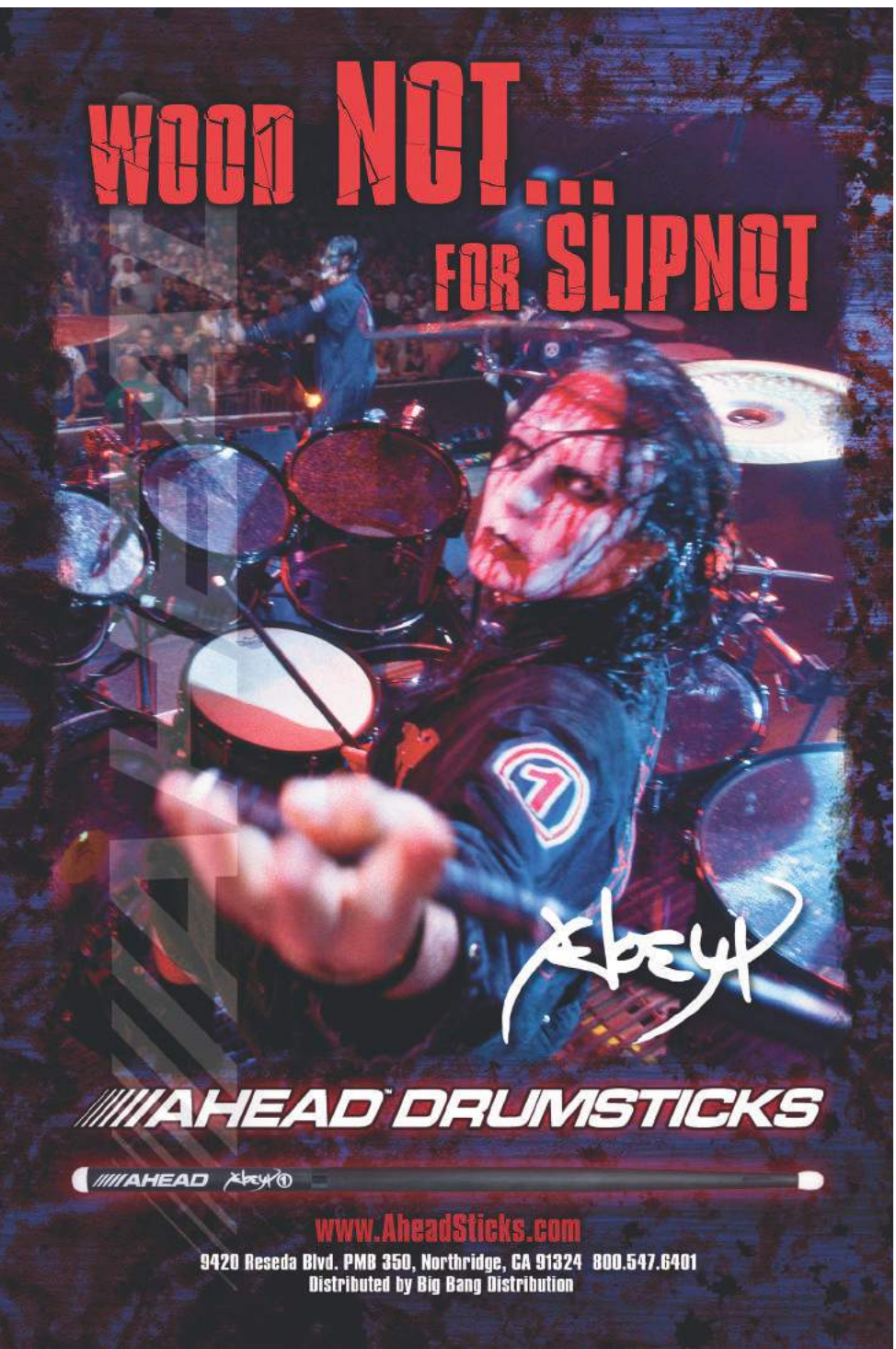
MD: Ideally, isn' t that what great music is all about? Those bands you mentioned have the greatest groove of all time, and there' s no click track on their records.

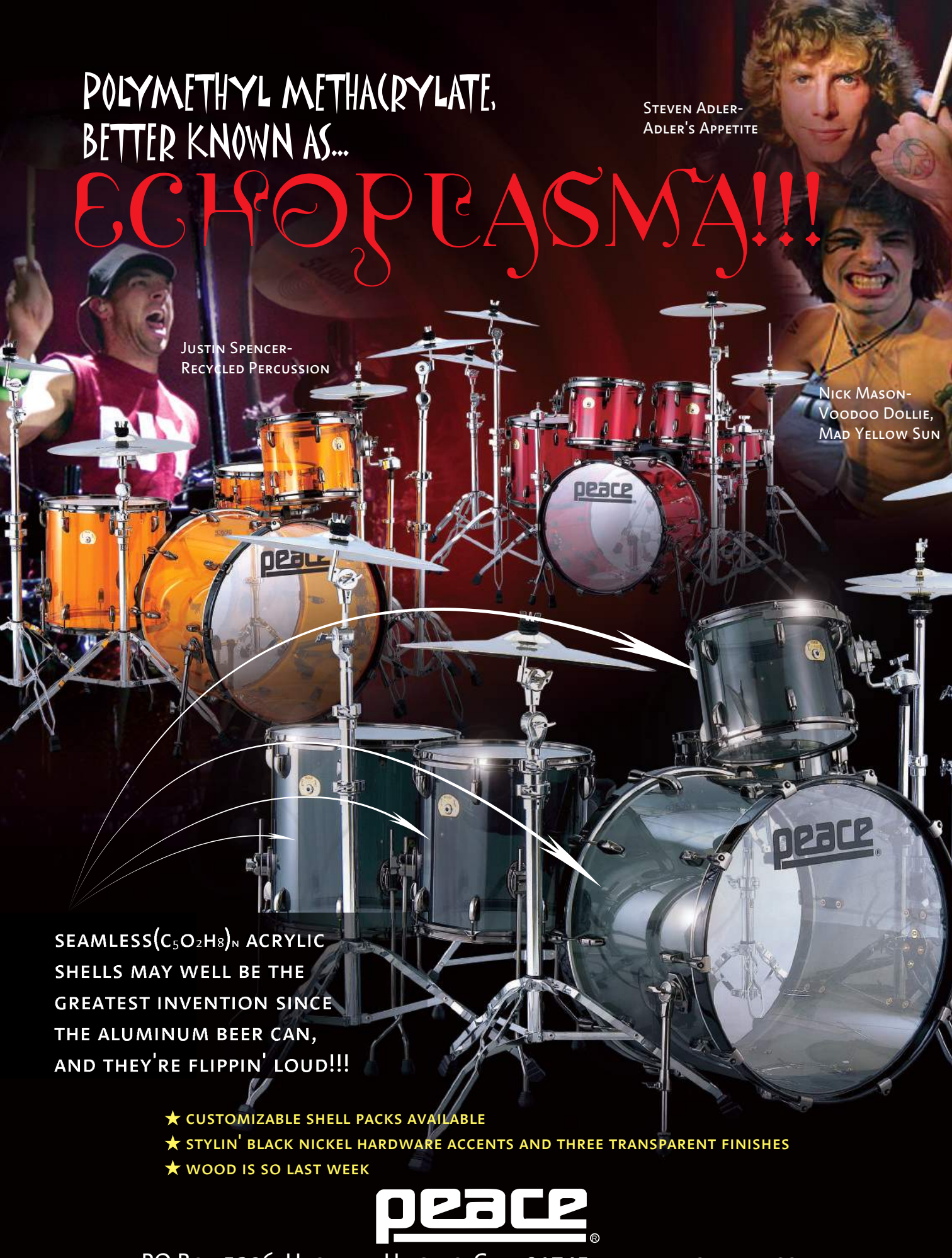
Rob: I definitely have a greater appreciation for that music. Part of what we were doing on Hybrid Theory came about because we really liked the loop feel. It' s a part of our sound. We did a lot of that stuff as an artistic decision.

MD: It sounds like you took more of an organic approach this time. But there is that You Tube video where you explain your process of writing beats in Pro Tools for Meteora.

Rob: On Meteora, if I heard something in my head that I wanted to play but couldn' t pull off, I would create it in Pro Tools so I could listen to how it sounded. If it sounded great, I would spend the time practicing it. I did that for Minutes To Midnight as well, but more so in the writing process.

MD: Isn' t that an unnatural way to create a

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drum part for a song?

Rob: I look at Pro Tools as a new instrument in making music. You can do things with it that I know the traditional musician might view as cheating. But it gives me an opportunity to try things that I might not think of. You start moving stuff around in Pro Tools, you hear something unique, and you can end up building off of that. It' s using the technology of Pro Tools and musicianship together to come up with a great part.

I' ve been using Pro Tools since Meteora, and I' ve gotten pretty quick with it. When I would lay down a drum part and it wasn' t the best take, it was quicker for me to fix it in Pro Tools than to sit there and practice. That made me adept at Pro Tools, but at the same time I was thinking, If I keep having to do this, I' m not spending enough time practicing the drums. I separate those two worlds—working on writing music and practicing drumming. And practicing is the only way to get good. There is no quick and easy way to become a good drummer.

MD: What' s in your Pro Tools setup?

Rob: I' m using a Mac G5 with Pro Tools HD. I just upgraded to the latest version for this recording. I added a ton of plug-ins. We wanted all of our individual rigs to run the same way as the rig in the studio. Mike set up my Pro Tools template and fine-tuned my drum sounds.

Methods And Minutes

MD: What do you like to practice?

Rob: I got really into this single stroke–roll practice regimen. I noticed while watching Carter Beauford that he' s incredibly fast, and I felt there was a huge freedom in being able to do that. Because of that I wanted to speed up my single-stroke rolls. I really worked on that as a warmup, and I noticed that if I would sit for a half hour just practicing that on a pad or a snare drum, it really helped my overall drumming.

I' ve also been doing a lot of work going back and forth between different toms, just to make sure I was hitting the toms solidly in the center of each drum. I' d play these simple patterns where I' d start very slowly and then gradually raise the tempo. Working on those types of things made getting around the kit so much easier.

MD: How did you practice single strokes?

Rob: I set up a click track in Pro Tools that would jump up a couple of bpm every two and a half minutes. I have a bunch of different practice templates in Pro Tools that I use. I also worked on perfecting certain patterns. If it was an 80-bpm pattern, I would start at 50 bpm and work it up over the course of a half hour. By the time I got it to 80 bpm, it would be solid.

In the past I would get excited before shows and not warm up. When I did that, it would be much more difficult to get through a show. You have to warm up or it strains your muscles. If you start with a slow warm up, the show seems to be easier. My practice routine would include single strokes into paradiddles leading into double strokes. I also got into different triplet exercises, putting accents in weird spots. That helped my coordination.

MD: Where do you see yourself in five years?

Rob: I see myself still in Linkin Park. I' m excited to play this new record live, which we' ll be doing over the course of the next two years. And as a drummer, I want to continue to get better. I feel like I' m just scratching the surface. I watch all the great drummers when we play festivals. I try to pick up something from everybody. I just want to continue to grow as a drummer and musician.

People always joke that drummers aren' t musicians, but I' m really trying to become a better musician, songwriter, and drummer. I think all of those areas influence each other. The better musician and songwriter I become, the better drummer I' ll be.

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James Brown

LONG LIVE THE GODFATHER—THE MAN WHO GAVE THE DRUMMER SOME!

BY JIM PAYNE

James Brown was buried in a gold casket. "But what else would he have, you know?" said one of his female admirers in a tiger-print overcoat waiting in line at the viewing. "What else would he have?"

Show business was James Brown's bag, and he wasn't afraid to, literally, hang from the rafters during an early double bill competing against Little Richard. How about jumping off a grand piano and landing in a split on the floor? A man like that, you gotta love.

James cultivated a show business persona like no other. "Hair is the first thing," he said. "What killed Fabian was he started losing his hair. Same thing killed Tony Curtis. Hair is the first thing, and teeth are second," he said, emerging from forty-five minutes under a hair dryer. "Hair and teeth, a man got those two things, he's got it all." In actuality, James had a *lot* more.

With all his show business savvy, James was also very music savvy, and very drummer savvy in particular. He understood the drums because he was a drummer himself, and as "the hardest working man in show business," it follows he had to have "the hardest working drummers in show business." And those drummers defined his sound. "James built his bands around his drummers," recalls JB drummer Clayton Fillyau. "Every time James Brown's style changed, his drummer changed."

James was so enamored with the drums that he hired two, three, and sometimes even four or five drummers, who all set up on the stage at the same time. He used each for a specific feel or to simply spell each other during the long, grueling shows. And James demanded their undivided attention whether playing or not. As Clayton Fillyau recalls, "When he pointed a finger at you, you'd better be there!"

Drummer Clyde Stubblefield describes the overall effect: "When the band was really hittin', we were like Sherman tanks coming down the aisle!"

James Brown's impact?

Dan Ackroyd said, "James Brown was the originator of funk, rap, hard R&B, and hard soul. He was one of the most entertaining, engaging, charismatic, and magnetic personalities God has ever created." Little Richard said, "He was an innovator, he was an emancipator, he was an originator. Rap music, all that stuff came from James Brown."

And along the way his drummers changed the rhythmic feel of popular music forever.

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Early Years: Dancing & Overcoming

James Brown was born "about as poor as you could be," in a one-room shack in the woods in Barnwell, South Carolina, near the Georgia border. At age four his mother abandoned him, his father drifted off, and his Aunt Minnie took him with her to live in her sister's brothel in Augusta, Georgia, then affectionately known as "Sin City." By age eight, James had seen just about all there is to see. He shined shoes and danced in the streets to get nickels and dimes from his first audience, soldiers stationed at nearby Camp Gordon. As a dancer turned drummer, historically he's in the good company of Buddy Rich and Steve Gadd. Bill Wyman of The Stones recalled, "James did the most incredible dancing—like Mick, only about twenty times faster…."

JB's dancing was twenty times faster, but in his early years, his wardrobe was so raggedy he was sent home from school for "insufficient clothes." Later he would incorporate three and four wardrobe changes into each show. At his funeral viewing at the Apollo in New York (in the gold casket), he was wearing a suit of spangled midnight-blue satin. At the second, private viewing, in Augusta, he was wearing a black suit with a red shirt. His clothes were also changed at a third viewing in Augusta at the James Brown Arena.

Young JB began playing music on anything he could get his hands on. He swept out a local church so he could play the piano when there was no one around. And Tampa Red taught him some guitar when the famed blues man stayed at the Augusta house.

James was impressed when he saw preacher Daddy Grace "really get down," as he called it. Grace, who had houses of prayer in more than thirty cities in the east and south, wore a cape, sat on a throne, and had long curly hair and suits made out of money!

Singing & Playing Drums

James started singing and playing drums around Augusta with his Cremona Trio. Completely self-taught, his drumset consisted

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of a snare drum, a 26" parade bass drum, and a cymbal cut out of sheet metal. (One can only imagine how that sounded.) He played lefty on a righty set—shades of Jimi Hendrix. The trio' s repertoire included songs by early R&B innovators Charles Brown, Amos Milburn, Bill Doggett, Faye Adams, Joe Turner, and Hank Ballard & The Midnighters. R&B architect Louis Jordan was James' biggest influence at that time.

At age fifteen, James was arrested for stealing hubcaps and anything easily lifted from inside unlocked cars. He was given the unbelievably unfair sentence of eight to sixteen years! In prison they called him Music Box, because he played and sang for the prisoners. He worked off his excess energy by boxing and playing baseball.

In 1952, after three years, James was released when singer Bobby Byrd' s mom said she would take him in and be his guardian, after which he got a job washing and waxing cars at Lawson Motors in Toccoa, Georgia. But after the boss made him wash and wax the same car twice, James thought it would be a fair reward to take the car for a little joyride. The joyride ended when he turned the car over in a ditch. Of course, he got fired, and also barely escaped going back to jail. He continued singing in Bobby' s group, The Flames.

When Little Richard came to town, James and the boys jumped on stage during an intermission and stole the show. Richard graciously sent them to his agent in Macon, Clint Brantly, who changed their name to The Famous Flames, prompting Richard to remark, " Y' all are the onliest people who ever made yourselves famous before you were famous!" (James and the group actually got some of Richard' s gigs when Richard couldn' t make it, and Brantly insisted James actually pretend he was Little Richard!)

The group was signed to King Records, but when they recorded their first record, " Please, Please, Please," company president Syd Nathan hated it, saying, " It' s a stupid song. It' s only got one word!" It eventually became a million-seller. James was off and running.

Hank Ballard introduced James to booking agent Ben Bart of Universal Attractions, and Bart started their long relationship by setting up a tour of sixty one-nighters in a row.

' 50s R&B Rhythms

R&B rhythms of the late ' 50s and early ' 60s were usually of four distinct types:

1. Slow to medium-tempo ballads based on 8th-note triplets and backbeats. This

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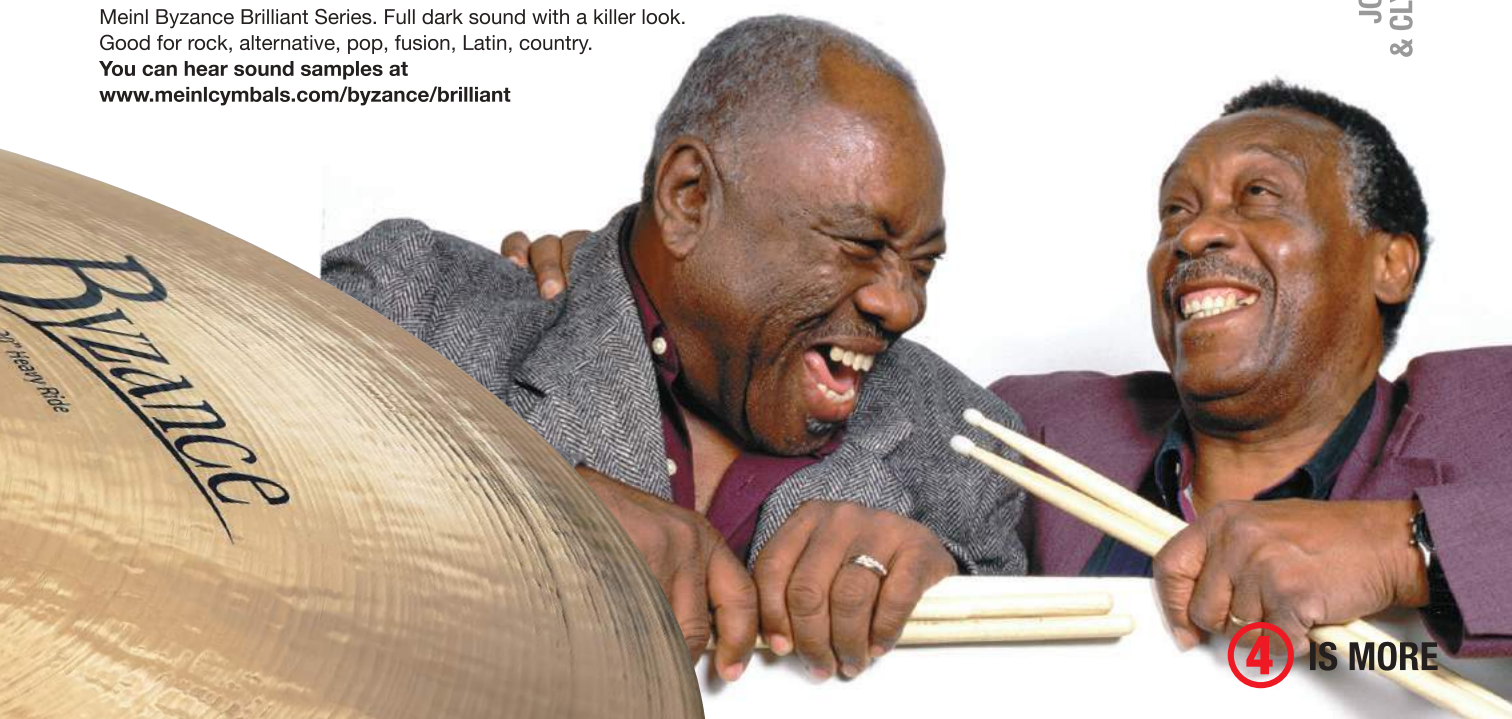


JOHN `JABO' STARKS & CLYDE STUBBLEFIELD
James Brown

4 IS MORE

was the rhythm of "Please, Please, Please."

2. Uptempo Gospel rhythms, fast two-beat rhythms with quarter notes in the right hand, 2 and 4 on the snare, and an underlying swing feel. "Shout & Shimmy."

3. 8th-note rock feels, originating in New Orleans, with a pseudo Afro-Cuban feel, usually imitating conga drum rhythms on the drumset, with straight 8ths in the right hand. "Think," "Hold It."

4. Shuffles. "Devil's Den."

James And Nat Kendrick Trade Off On Drums

When I first saw the high-powered JB show, Nat Kendrick was playing drums, and was also featured out front singing a tune called "The Mashed Potatoes." During that song he traded places with James, who played drums—making sure, of course, not to ruffle his green sequin tails with orange silk pants' stripe, lapels, and lining! James didn't miss a lick, and the fans loved it.

James also played drums and sang on his single of Bill Doggett's "Hold It." On the instrumental "Night Train," the story has it that Nat Kendrick got up and went to the bathroom just before the take. James was impatient and ready to record, so he got behind the drums and played the tune himself! It's an 8th-note groove that sounds a lot like some of Nat's playing, which brings up an important point, namely, that all James Brown's drummers learned from each other. As more and more sophisticated beats were developed, they were passed on from drummer to drummer. After a while, the drummers sounded so alike that some people thought he only had one drummer throughout his career. On "Night Train" it's possible that James actually did some studying under Nat Kendrick. (See Classic Groove #1 on page 100.)

"Night Train" was the last of James' own efforts to play drums in the studio, but he continued to play on a number or two during the live show, much to the chagrin of the various super-funky drummers who had to stand idly by while the boss bogarted the spotlight.

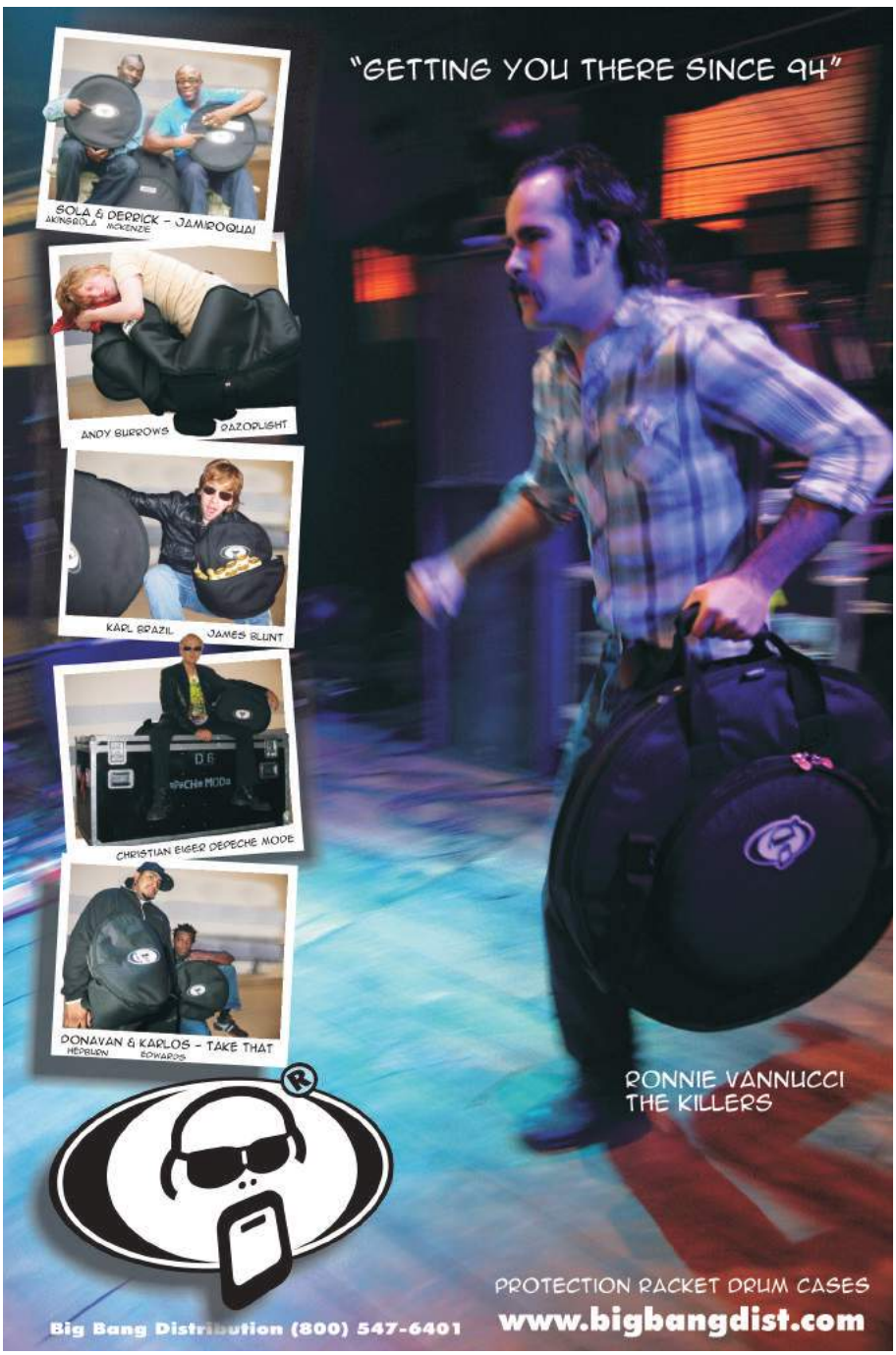
Nat Kendrick was the solid and creative drummer who played on many of the early James Brown singles. The most popular was "Think," on which he played a fairly straightforward 8th-note beat—with two exceptions. First, he played a pronounced "1" and the "&" of 2 on the bass drum, and second, he was the first of many JB drummers to use an overall feel somewhere between straight 8ths and a shuffle, in this leaning much closer to the straight-8th feel.

Nat's most unique contribution to the James Brown legacy is the little-known "Soul Food, Pt. 1 & 2," which is on the Soul Pride compilation. This groove foreshadows many of the JB drummers' future innovations—a strong accent on the "&" of 4, no "1" at the beginning of the second measure of a two-measure beat, and both 16th- and 32nd-note ghost notes. (See Classic Groove #2.)

Clayton Fillyau And The James Brown Beat

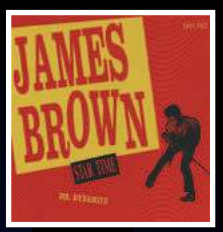
James kept refining his show, staying on the road continually. He added his famous cape routine after he saw the cape-wearing wrestler Gorgeous George on TV in a hotel room. He was also impressed by The Isley Brothers, who took to the stage like Tarzan, swinging down on ropes.

By 1962 James had a new drummer. Though James had originally refused the plea of the young man in Jacksonville, Florida to sit in, when he later heard Clayton Fillyau (pronounced Filly-aw), by then a veteran of The Etta James Band, he was amazed at what he heard. A month later James sent him a plane ticket to join the band in Cheyenne, Wyoming.



FUNK POWER!

8 Must-Have JB Recordings



1. *Star Time*, 4-CD Box Set (Polydor 849 108-2)
This is the definitive JB collection. It features all of the essential singles from every period, as well as a few live cuts. Also included is a great info booklet, which has all personnel and dates listed.

2. *20 All-Time Greatest Hits!* (Polydor 314 511 326-2)
This single CD contains all of JB's hits.

3. *Live At The Apollo* (King 826, Reissue: Polydor 843 479-2)
This is a seminal album, the record that broke JB nationwide. Clayton Fillyau is on drums.

4. *Live At The Apollo, Vol. 2* (King 1022, Reissue: Polydor 823 001-2)
Another classic, this one featuring Clyde Stubblefield and John "Jabo" Starks on drums.

5. *Sex Machine, Live In Atlanta* (Reissue: Polydor 314 517 984-2)
Another smokin' live show, with very powerful performances from Clyde, Jabo, and Bootsy Collins.

6. *Funk Power* (Polygram 31453 1684-2)
This one features all of JB's hits from the 1970s, including the favorite "Since You Been Gone." Clyde and Jabo alternate on drums.

7. *Say It Live And Loud: Live In Dallas* (Polygram 31455-7688-2)
This is a recently released 1968 show featuring Clyde and Nate Jones on drums. Slammin'!

8. *Soul Pride* (Polydor 314 517 845-2)
Here's another great box set, a collection of JB's instrumentals from the '50s to "Funky Drummer."

When he landed, Fillyau recalls, "I didn't see nothin' but white folks and Indians, and the snow was three feet deep!"

Fillyau, who had first played trombone in his high school band and then had taken up the drums in the army, combined the New Orleans rhythms he learned from the drummer in Huey "Piano" Smith's band (possibly Charles "Hungry" Williams) with marching cadences from Florida A&M, and created what became known as "the James Brown Beat." He first unveiled it on the single "I Got Money." (See Classic Groove #3.)

James was so possessive of Clayton's unique rhythms that he put him under contract, refused to let him play for anyone else, and even disliked him sharing any of his ideas with other drummers. Clayton didn't agree with this policy, and he shared the rhythms with any serious student. Later he became the person to teach drummer Clyde Stubblefield JB's show. As they sat in the bar humming the tunes and breaks, Clayton would playfully punch Clyde in the shoulder when he made a mistake, and then insist Clyde pay for the drinks.

Fillyau is the only drummer on 1962's Live At The Apollo, the album that broke James Brown nationwide. It's the ultimate "showtime" performance—seamless from beginning to end, prime evidence of JB's non-stop showmanship and Clayton's creative, non-stop drumming. "We were the best," says Fillyau.

Live At The Apollo, the release of which King Records opposed—James financed it with his own money—stayed on the charts for sixty-six weeks, and remains a major musical influence.

Clayton had his rows with the boss, but also had a deep respect for the man, and prided himself on being able to reproduce the sounds James heard in his head. "If he wanted something played a certain way," Fillyau recalls, "he didn't have to tell me but once. If he hummed it or tried to show it to me, I went in his head, got what he wanted, and gave it to him."

Clayton also believed that the "1" of each bar didn't necessarily have to be accented. "I

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Clayton Fillyau

was taught from my music teacher, Reynolds Davis, that if you know where the ' 1' is, ' 1' doesn' t have to be on the bass drum, it doesn' t have to be on the snare. It can be on the cymbal. You can miss ' 1' and play it on the upbeat, as long as you know where it is! And I told the bass player, ' Your days of leanin' on the drummer are over. You' re gonna have to play. I' m not carryin' no straight time.' "

Many years later James finally gave Clayton his due when he brought him up on stage at a concert and said, " This is the man who put the funk in the funk, Mr. Clayton Fillyau. Without him, there would be no James Brown like he is today," a rare instance in which one of the many sidemen who worked so hard to support the Godfather was given some well-deserved credit.

Next Up: The Parker Brothers—Melvin And Maceo

In 1964 and 1965 James recorded three of his most well-known songs, " Out Of Sight," " Papa' s Got A Brand New Bag," and " I Got You (I Feel Good)." The last two reached number-1 on the R&B charts. The drummer on all three tracks was Melvin Parker, a soft-spoken man from Kinston, North Carolina who says he just tried to play something " clean, funky, and different."

James was always on the lookout for new musicians, especially new drummers. He first saw Melvin at the El Rocco club in Greensboro, North Carolina and offered him a job that night. But Melvin stayed in school for another year, until James came back to town. When he approached Mr. Brown about that job offer, Melvin insisted that he also take his sax-playing brother, Maceo, who went on to become one of James' biggest assets as a soloist, and who now has a very successful career on his own.

Melvin, who came from a musical family and had studied JB' s material, learned the show in a month and started to take over. By this time Fillyau had moved on to his new job, road manager. Melvin says that musical director Nate Jones wanted to clean up the " muddy" James Brown sound. On " I Got You (I Feel Good)" Melvin went to the closed hi-hat, when most drummers were still playing time on the ride cymbal, and used the rimclick on the snare for a clear, definite backbeat. The bass drum part featured offbeats on the " &s," which kicked the rhythm along, adding more syncopation without disrupting the groove. (See Classic Groove #4.)

" Papa' s Got A Brand New Bag" was the song that many think signaled the coming of the funk era. Recorded in less than an hour one afternoon before a gig, the released version was actually slightly sped up because James didn' t think it was intense enough. Music writer Dave Marsh has described this song as " bone-rattling..as if Brown himself leaped from your speakers, grabbed you tight by the shoulders, and danced you around the room, all the while screaming straight into your face." Marsh added, " No record before ' Papa' s Got A Brand New Bag' sounded anything like it. No record since—certainly no dance record—has been unmarked by it."

James sent it to New York DJ Frankie Crocker, who thought it was " terrible" but played it anyway. It became one of James' biggest hits. JB says, " I was trying to get every aspect of the production to contribute to the rhythmic pattern." (See Classic Groove #5.)

The show went on, and in 1964 JB upstaged everyone on the TAMI TV special, a bill that included Smokey Robinson, Marvin Gaye, Lesley Gore, The Barbarians, Chuck Berry, The Beach Boys, and The Rolling Stones. It was no contest,

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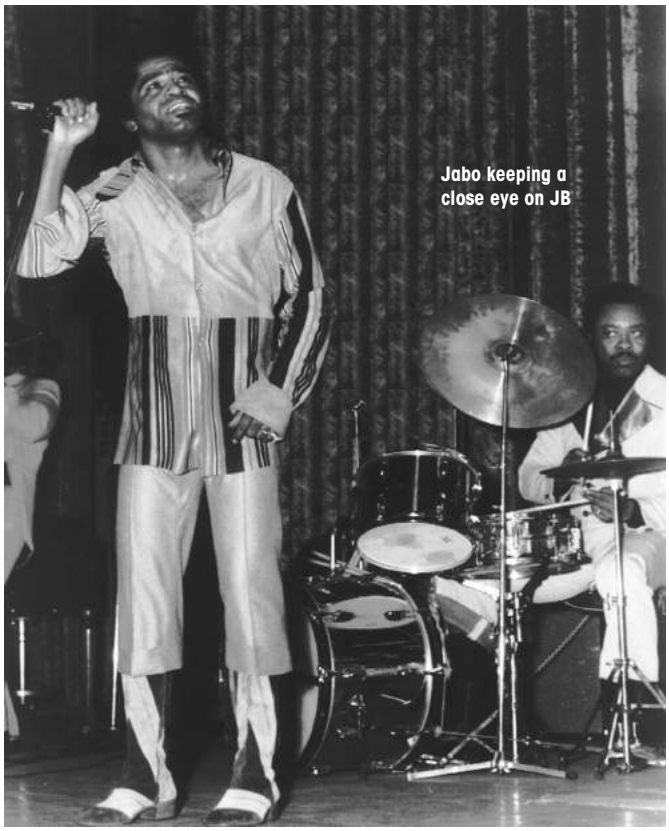
he won hands down, and The Stones, particularly Mick Jagger, were in awe of James' unique combination of raw soul and a hard-driving, electrifying show. The word was getting out, but James was already looking for a new sound.


Jabo keeping a close eye on JB

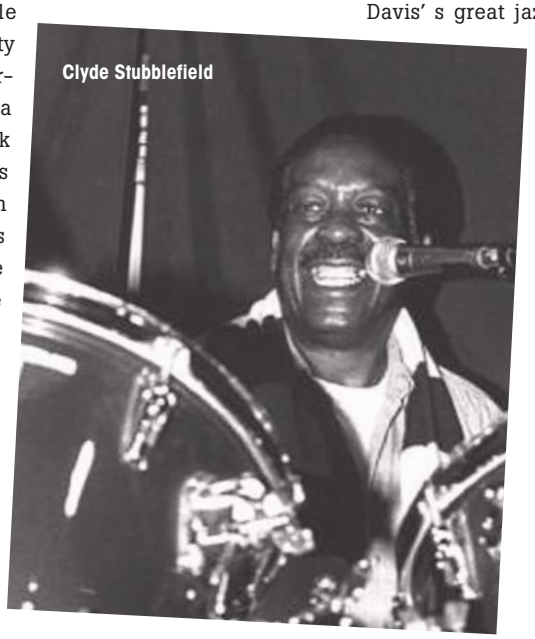
Jabo And Clyde

In 1965 Melvin Parker went into the army and James began pursuing Bobby "Blue" Bland's drummer, John "Jabo" Starks (pronounced Jabbo). This time he was looking for a more jazz-oriented approach. With Bland since 1959, Starks had already recorded some of the great blues singer's biggest hits: "I Pity The Fool," "Turn On Your Lovelight," and "Stormy Monday Blues." As Jabo told Modern Drummer, "James would send different people from his organization to wherever we were working. Every time we would play the East Coast, there would be someone there saying, 'Mr. Brown wants you to join the group.' 'Well, I'm happy where I am,' I'd say." Finally, James made Jabo a financial offer he couldn't refuse.

Starks recorded more charting James Brown singles than any other drummer. His hard-grooving but relaxed and dependable recording style was coupled with an ability to crank up the energy at a live performance to a fever pitch. Jabo could play a mean shuffle and could also put the funk groove somewhere between straight 8ths and 16th-note triplets to turn it into an infectious half-time shuffle. Again, James put Jabo under contract because he wanted to be sure this new rhythm style would remain his and his alone.

Used to having at least two drummers on the show, James now sealed the deal by hiring Clyde Stubblefield, a burly man from Chattanooga who had been playing with Otis Redding. When Clyde arrived, there were five sets of drums on stage. Eventually James broke it down to two drummers, Clyde and Jabo. Jabo describes Clyde as "a New Orleans funk drummer." His style meshed perfectly with Jabo's jazz-flavored groove.

Around this time, sax player Pee Wee Ellis took over as bandleader. Pee Wee had studied with Sonny Rollins and was an accomplished jazz player. The band also included ace trumpeter Waymond Reed, James' future bandleader, trombonist Fred Wesley, and Maceo Parker. With this combination of players, James now had the soul version of one of Miles Davis's great jazz


Clyde Stubblefield

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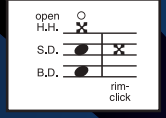
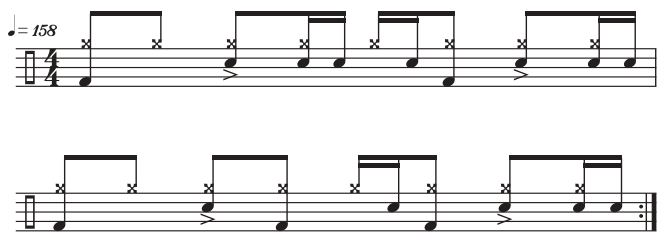


10 Classic GODFATHER GROOVES

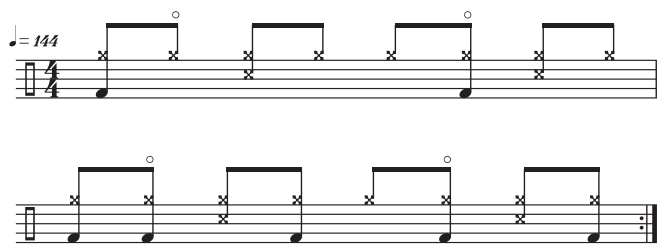
1. "Night Train" (1962), James Brown (on drums):

2. "Soul Food, Parts 1 & 2" (1963), Nat Kendrick:

3. "I Got Money" (1962), Clayton Fillyau:

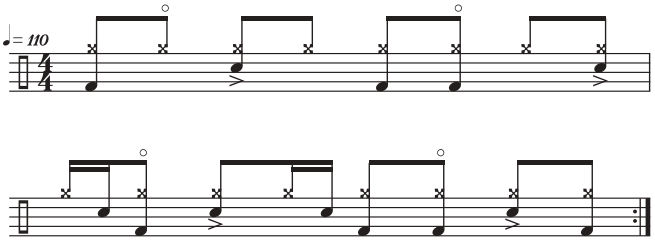


4. "I Got You (I Feel Good)" (1965), Melvin Parker:

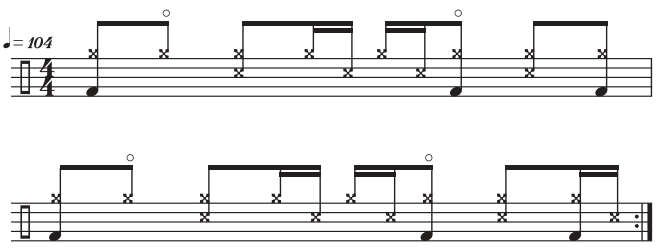


5. "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag" (1965), Melvin Parker:

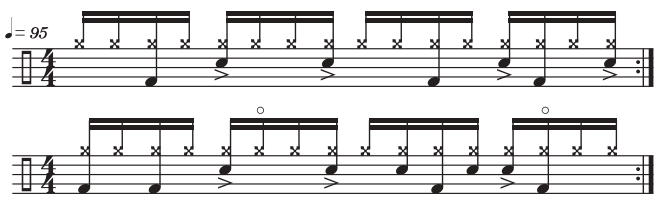
6. "Cold Sweat" (1967), Clyde Stubblefield:



7. "Licking Stick—Licking Stick" (1968), John "Jabo" Starks:

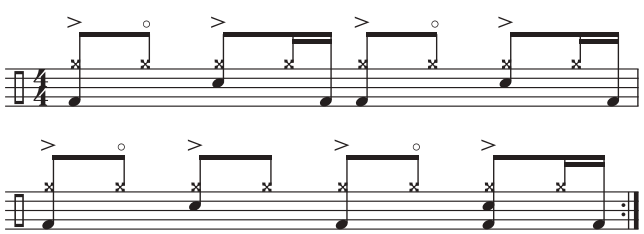


8. "Funky Drummer" (1969), Clyde Stubblefield:



9. "Get Up (I Feel Like Being A) Sex Machine" (1970), John "Jabo" Starks:

10. "The Payback" (1974), John "Jabo" Starks:



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quintets: a band that could understand his vision and take it to unexpected heights. Humorously taking this analogy even further, another writer said James was basically "Miles Davis with dance moves."

"Cold Sweat"

Clyde Stubblefield turned the R&B world on its ear with his intense, angular drumming on "Cold Sweat." James had previously grunted the rhythm of the bass line to Ellis, but the real catalyst was Clyde's beat. Everything seemed to be woven around it—the bass line and the horn line. "'Cold Sweat' deeply affected the musicians I knew," recalls Jerry Wexler, former president of Atlantic Records. "It just freaked them out. For a time, no one could get a handle on what to do next." From then on the specific drum beat became a part of the song. If you were going to play "Cold Sweat," you had to play, or try to play, Clyde's beat. (See Classic Groove #6.)

On Part 2 of the song, instead of "jumping back and kissing himself," as he did on another tune, JB stepped back and asked, "Can I give the drummer some?" Clyde delivered a very tasteful, groove-oriented solo, thus establishing "Give the drummer some!" as a rallying cry for drummer respect.

Clyde cranked it up a notch on the next single, "I Got The Feelin'," on which he played multiple left-hand ghost notes and syncopated accents in groups of three.

Live At The Apollo, Vol. 2

Jabo and Clyde became a powerhouse team, joining forces for some intense, almost manic groove-making on one of James' all-time classic live recordings, Live At The Apollo, Vol. 2. The two drummers never played simultaneous, full-set grooves. Rather, one would play the main groove while the other played cymbal crashes and accents, locking in the structure of the tune and catching James' dance moves. By this time JB was also using two guitars, playing interlocking, complementary parts.

The James Brown "orchestra" had swelled to twenty pieces. James was thirty-three years old, had thirty charted records, had played the Ed Sullivan TV show, and had bought himself a Lear jet. He had also introduced a strict system of discipline he thought necessary to run such a large organization. Musicians were fined for musical mistakes and less-than-perfectly shined shoes—surely a holdover from the boss' own shoe shining days.

James also had complete control of band wardrobe. Clayton Fillyau recalls, "When you went on stage, the only thing that you owned was your underwear! James Brown bought your shoes, your socks, your suit, your shirt, and your ties, and believe me, if you lost any one of them, you would pay dearly."

Tiptoeing around an ego this large wasn't easy, but bandmembers found their ways. Jabo says he would try to accommodate James when he suggested different drum parts and finally, when the boss said, "That's it." Jabo

would agree, knowing he was actually playing the rhythm he had created in the first place!

James certainly had his idiosyncrasies. He had his own ideas on just about every aspect of his show, which weren' t always decipherable by the bandmembers or the public. For example, his choice of artists to honor in a section of the show: " Let' s hear it for—Elvis Presley..Otis Redding..Mama Cass..Jerry Garcia..Jimi Hendrix..Mickey Mantle...." James was a man who did things " his way." (I presume Mickey Mantle was one of JB' s early baseball heroes.)

Nate Jones

Another talented drummer who deserves mention at this point is Nate Jones. His funky groove survives on the 1968 hit " Give It Up Or Turnit A Loose," and in partnership with Clyde Stubblefield, he helped to produce another classic JB live recording—the recently released Say It Live And Loud: Live In Dallas. (See the discography.)

1970—The ' 60s Band Leaves

As great as this combination of musicians was, it didn' t last long. The band' s travel schedule was grueling, they played long and exacting shows night after night, and, as Melvin Parker, who was back in the band at that point, recalls, " We were unhappy with the distribution of funds." James didn' t agree with this, and most of the band, including Clyde, Melvin, and Maceo, quit. Pee Wee Ellis had already left. Jabo was the only one who stayed because he was under contract. James foresaw the outcome and flew in a young band he knew from Cincinnati, The Pacesetters.

The Pacesetters played the show in Columbus, Georgia that night. Most of them were fairly inexperienced, but the bass player, Bootsy Collins (who showed up with a $29 greenish-blue Silvertone guitar converted into a bass) and his brother, guitarist Phelps " Catfish" Collins, brought something new to the band. " Bootsy had a different concept of playing his instrument. When he would sit in a groove, everything on you moved," recalls Jabo. JB insisted he helped shape Bootsy' s groove. " I got him to key in on the dynamic parts of the ' 1' instead of playing all around it. Then he could do all his other stuff in the right places—after the ' 1.' " This change resulted in a great drummer/bass-player partnership. Jabo was savvy enough to stay out of Bootsy' s way, so to speak, but was still there anchoring the groove.

The most remembered result of this new direction was "Sex Machine." When JB rode the bus after a gig one night, he and Bobby Byrd wrote the lyrics on a paper bag, "Get up, get on up. Stay on the scene like a sex machine." They recorded the song the next day, with the rhythm section only, no horns. "I discovered that my strength was not in the horns but in the rhythm," said James. "I was hearing everything, even the guitars, like they were drums." (See Classic Groove #9.)

Other significant recordings during the "Bootsy" period were "Super Bad," "Talkin' Loud & Sayin' Nothing," and "Soul Power," all with Jabo Starks on drums.

After one year and sixteen days in the band, Bootsy and Catfish left, eventually jumping on George Clinton's Mothership.

Disco—Between Funk And A Hard Place

"Disco is a very small part of funk," James said. "It's the end of the song, the repetitious part, like a vamp. Disco stays on the surface, but in funk you dig into the groove. Disco was done with machines. You don't really need artists to make disco, it's producers music."

Now it was up to Fred Wesley, the new bandleader, and Jabo, the veteran, to deal with new musicians and a new musical landscape. Fred was undaunted. As far as the new musicians went, he said, "After all, whoever you put James Brown in front of becomes a great band." The results were, again, impressive. "The Payback" (see Classic Groove #10) was not considered funky by Polydor, James' new label, but the public thought otherwise; ditto for "Get On The Good Foot" and "Papa Don't Take No Mess." The arrangements were sparse and solid enough to compete with disco, and the JB magic was still there.

In recent years, James revived his career with a spot as the arm-waving preacher in the Blues Brothers movie, had another hit with "Living In America," and pushed on till the end, doing concerts with a new band that still had the funk.

James Brown, the Godfather of Soul, gave the drums center stage—literally. He had them set up in front of the horns and guitars, right behind him, and keyed in to their rhythms as the basis of his music. The rhythm section was everything for James. Today his music stands as the most sampled ever, and it can be heard on records by artists such as LL Cool J, Nine Inch Nails, Run-DMC, Sinead O'Connor, Jazzy Jeff, Salt-N-Pepa, and many, many more. The most sampled single track is Clyde Stubblefield's drum break on "Funky Drummer" (see Classic Groove #8), which appears on over a hundred fifty songs!

James Brown's music has influenced everyone from Miles Davis and Fela Kuti to Michael Jackson and Prince. Says rapper Chuck D of Public Enemy, "James presented obviously the best grooves. To this day, there has been no one near as funky. No one's even coming close."

Information and quotes for this article can be found in *The Great Drummers Of R&B, Funk & Soul,* by Jim Payne, and James Brown's autobiography, *The Godfather Of Soul,* written by Bruce Tucker. **Jim Payne** teaches in New York City, and performs with his band, The Jim Payne Band. For more information and sound samples of some of these beats, visit www.funkydrummer.com.

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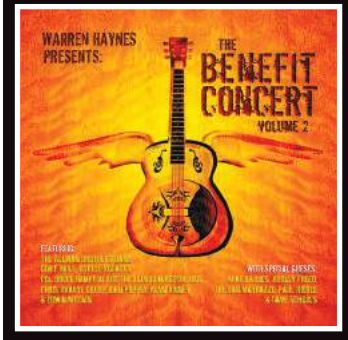

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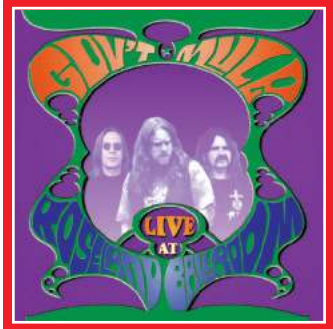

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Peter Erskine's

Puck Productions

Story by Waleed Rashidi • Photos by Alex Solca

If two-time Grammy-winning drummer Peter Erskine won the lottery, chances are he'd use his windfall to construct a deluxe, purpose-built, two-story studio behind his Santa Monica, California-based residence. But for a drum legend whose numbers haven't yet appeared, the single-story detached garage-turned-studio that he's had for twenty years is more than capable of housing all his business, including recording, composing, teaching, and running his record label, Fuzzy Music. Dubbed Puck Productions—from the character in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—Erskine's place is tight in both meanings of the word: It's impressive, and it's crammed with a host of instruments and recording gear.

Initially sparked by his wife's suggestion, Erskine designed the room to record live music. After installing custom-designed hanging baffles and experimenting with Auralex foam, Erskine was able to tighten the room's sound, and Puck became a *relatively* soundproof production spot. "We don't record on Thursdays, because that's the day the garbage trucks are working in the alleyway," he chuckles.

Though he originally used an Otari two-track reel-to-reel, today Erskine employs Digital Performer and Pro Tools for his recording and writing. "Digital Performer is very easy to use in terms of basic recording and sequencing," he enthuses. "For editing, Pro Tools seems to make a bit more sense to me, so I'm kind of straddling both platforms at the moment."

One of the room's most distinct and noticeable features is a beautiful marimba from Marimba One, which Erskine calls his mid-life crisis gift. "Instead of a red sports car, I got myself a five-octave marimba," he says.

Another highlight: two custom-built ceiling-mounted monitors. "They're upside down, since they were meant to be mounted on pedestals," Peter explains. "We came up with the ceiling mounts because I needed the floor space. Those mounts are actually titanium struts from an F-16. They're quite strong and they sound good." Peter adds that he also relies on a pair of Paradigm near-fields.

Erskine runs everything through a PreSonus central station and a Tact preamp, which is interfaced to a Mackie Onyx mic preamp. His Alesis disc recorder comes in handy when he transfers analog materials to digital. "And the DAT I'm keeping," he says, "because ultimately I want to archive stuff that I have on DAT or on cassette. I have a tremendous collection of music that people haven't heard."

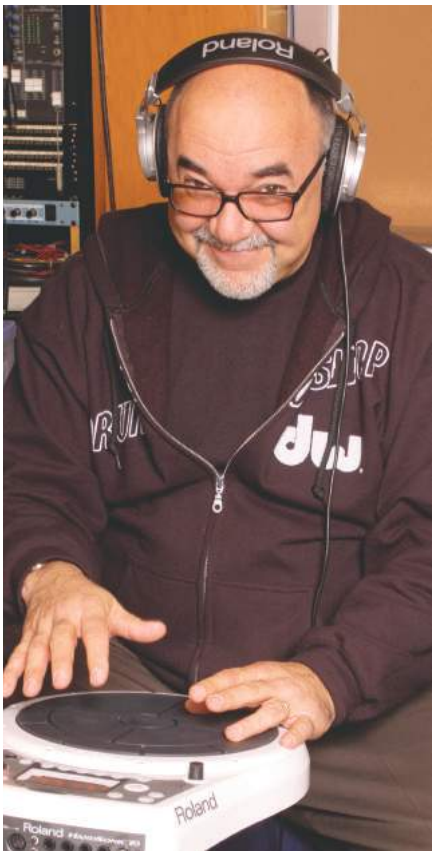
Erskine's computer setup is an Apple Mac G5 with two large LCD monitors and a DigiDesign 002 interface connected to a small Mackie mixing board. When he's on the road, Puck Productions comes with him in the form of an M-Audio O2 controller that's plugged into his 17" Apple MacBook Pro dual-core notebook computer.

Since Erskine's DW kits are a few feet away from his G5, he uses the TranzPort, a Bluetooth-based Pro Tools recording remote control, to record and review his tracks.

The kits in Erskine's studio are two distinctly different DW setups. There's a six-piece "fusion" set with several cymbals, as well as a traditional four-piece bop kit with an 18" kick drum and lightweight, flush-base stands, which he says is one of his favorite aspects of the kit. One unique aspect of the bop kit is a Sidekick bass pedal that's configured to strike the floor tom, à la a cocktail kit. "They had one of those attached to the floor tom at the factory, and I was like, 'Oooh!' It's very fun, especially for jazz stuff, because all of a sudden you're playing bass drum vocabulary but on a different drum. In fact, if you're using an 18" or 20" bass drum, or something larger that has more padding, and you want the option to go bop, you can do it that way."

Erskine uses a variety of Shure mics to record his drums; his fusion kit is close-miked, but the bop kit is primarily ambient-miked. "For an 18" bass drum," he explains, "I like using a smaller-diaphragm mic, and that's a Beta 56. Basically, a good tom mic works well for an 18" bass drum. I've got KSM32s for the overheads. I'd actually be happy with one mic hanging ear-level above the kit. For the more studio stuff, though, close-miking works better. I'm using Shure SM98s for the toms, a Beta 52 for the bass drum, and a KSM141 for the hi-hat and snare. And I have KSM44s as overheads."

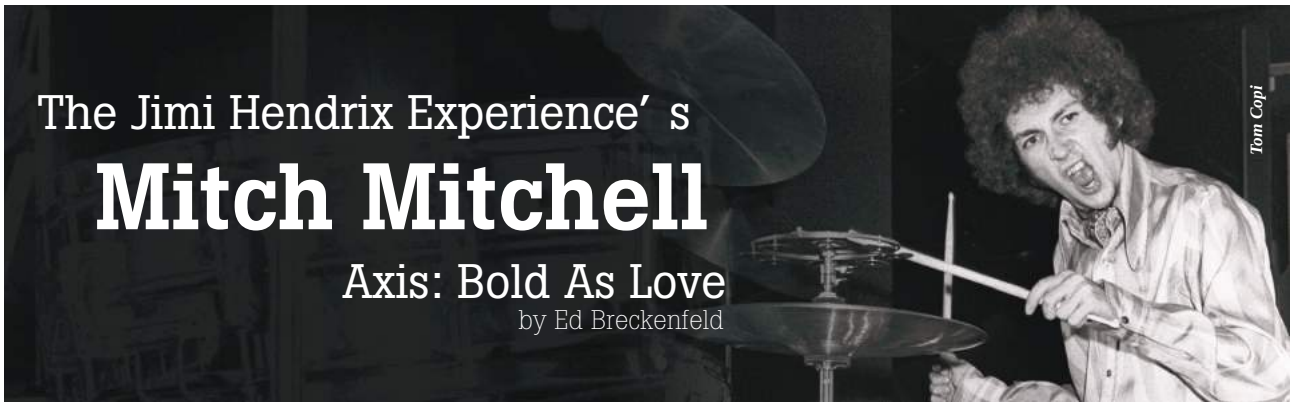
Puck Productions also serves as a storage facility, with a loft built into the ceiling and an isolation room that doubles as a closet. Inside you'll find the drums Peter uses for local jazz gigs—including the blue fade kit depicted in his DW ad—as well as a Samson PA system and some extra



mics and spare parts. Peter also has a variety of snares in that room, including a Rogers Dynasonic from his high school days, a Timeless Timber, a San Francisco model, a Trick aluminum, a Ludwig Acrolite, and a U.P. stave walnut that's made entirely of wood—even the throw-off!

The shed next to the isolation room contains shelves packed with extra heads, cymbals, and a set of tabla drums. It's a well-organized setup, which Erskine attributes to his obsessive-compulsive nature. On the shelf above Erskine's Yamaha piano is his first Grammy Award (from Weather Report in 1979; there's a new one coming soon). Some of the other instruments include a set of Roland V-Drums with a TD-20 module, and a Roland Handsonic percussion pad. Erskine keeps a pair of portable digital recording units handy, including the Edirol R09, which he says make for excellent teaching tools. "Any serious student of the instrument should at least have these," the drummer insists.

Most recently, Erskine replaced some of the carpeting with a checkered linoleum floor to liven up the room. "When I had the trio here with bassist Dave Carpenter," Peter recalls, "his first comment was, 'Wow, this bass sounds much better in here than it used to.' In a small space, depending on how many instruments you have, you have to kind of watch your dynamic levels, which is something I already enjoy doing."



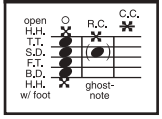
The Jimi Hendrix Experience's

Mitch Mitchell

Axis: Bold As Love

by Ed Breckenfeld

MUSIC KEY



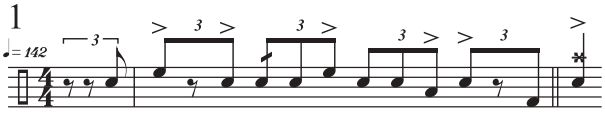
This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the rise of Jimi Hendrix, arguably the greatest of all rock guitarists. His band featured drummer Mitch Mitchell, who himself took a back seat to no one on his instrument at the time. The musical relationship between Hendrix and Mitchell was profound, each pushing the other to new heights of improvisational brilliance. This month we take a look back at a key recording that captured one of the finest drummers of that unforgettable era.

Hendrix released two albums in 1967, his debut, Are You Experienced, and the follow-up, Axis: Bold As Love. While the first album contains classic hits like "Purple Haze" and "Foxey Lady," Axis is sonically more experimental and stylistically diverse, which is reflected in Mitchell's creative drum parts. Here are some examples.

"Up From The Skies"

Axis opens with Hendrix imitating a spaceship launch using nothing but guitar feedback effects. Then the album takes an unexpected turn into this jazz-tinged track, which displays Mitch Mitchell's finesse on a swirling brush groove. Example 1 is his famous intro fill for this song. Notice how the last note of each triplet moves down the tones of the kit. (0:00)

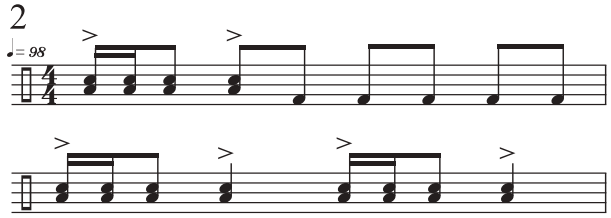
1



"Spanish Castle Magic"

The album finally moves in a rock direction on its third track. Mitchell mirrors Jimi's guitar rhythms for the song's verses, slightly swinging the 16th notes in his pattern. For the chorus, his beat works closely with Hendrix's vocal phrasing. The delayed snare hit on the "&" of beat 4 (measures 5 and 6) provides an interesting push/pull effect to his splashy crash/ride chorus groove. This sequence shows the end of the first verse into the chorus pattern. (0:23)

2



"Wait Until Tomorrow"

This tune contains some of Hendrix's finest rhythm-guitar work, along with several memorable fills from Mitchell. Here's the end of the first chorus, where Mitch's two-bar break (measures 3 and 4) brings the energy down into the guitar-only re-intro. (0:37)

3

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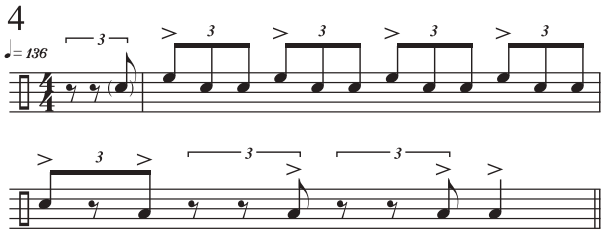
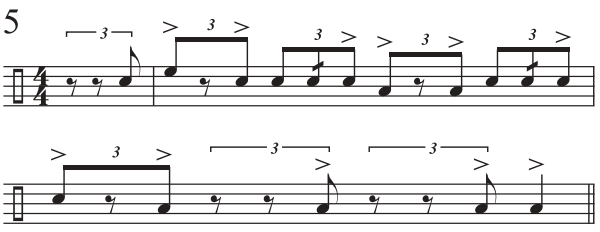
MITCH MITCHELL

"Little Wing"

This is one of Hendrix's most-loved ballads. After Jimi's breathtaking guitar intro, Mitchell's entrance fill is a true classic, as important to the track as the guitar work. (0:32)



The fill leading into the second verse is just as powerful. Mitchell's strategically placed double strokes create a wonderful sliding effect. (1:04)

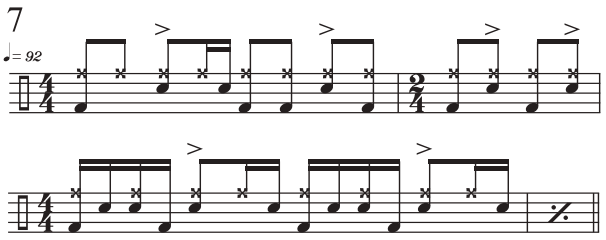


"If 6 Was 9"

Mitchell's hi-hat pattern for the intro and verses of this tune remains as one of rock's most recognizable drum parts. His jazz influences take over in the chorus as he leads through the chord changes with an improvisational approach, blurring the lines between beats and fills. (0:34)

"Castles Made Of Sand"

Though remembered as a chops-heavy player, Mitchell was also very tasteful and musical. In the verses of this song, his pattern is straightforward (measure 1). Then during the non-vocal interlude between verses, Mitch pulls out a cool 16th-note snare pattern (measures 3 and 4) to keep the interest up for the two-bar sequence. (0:24)



"She's So Fine"

On this song by Experience bassist Noel Redding, Mitchell comes up with another memorable beat. A few years later, Keith Moon would use a similar concept—placing a recurring fill inside of a beat—for several Who tunes, though his patterns usually featured a triplet ruff. Mitchell's is in straight 16ths. (0:11)

"Little Miss Lover"

Hendrix lets Mitch's strong funk beat start this track for several measures. The two offbeat snare hits are slightly delayed to enhance the depth of the groove. (0:00)

"Bold As Love"

Mitchell reuses his chorus beat from "Spanish Castle Magic" on the choruses of the album's closer. However, this time the tempo is slower, and the feel is swung. It's another example of Mitch bringing his jazzy approach to Hendrix's bluesy rock style, a magical combination that sounds as compelling today as it did forty years ago. (0:29)

Ed Breckenfeld can be reached through his Web site, www.edbreckenfeld.com.

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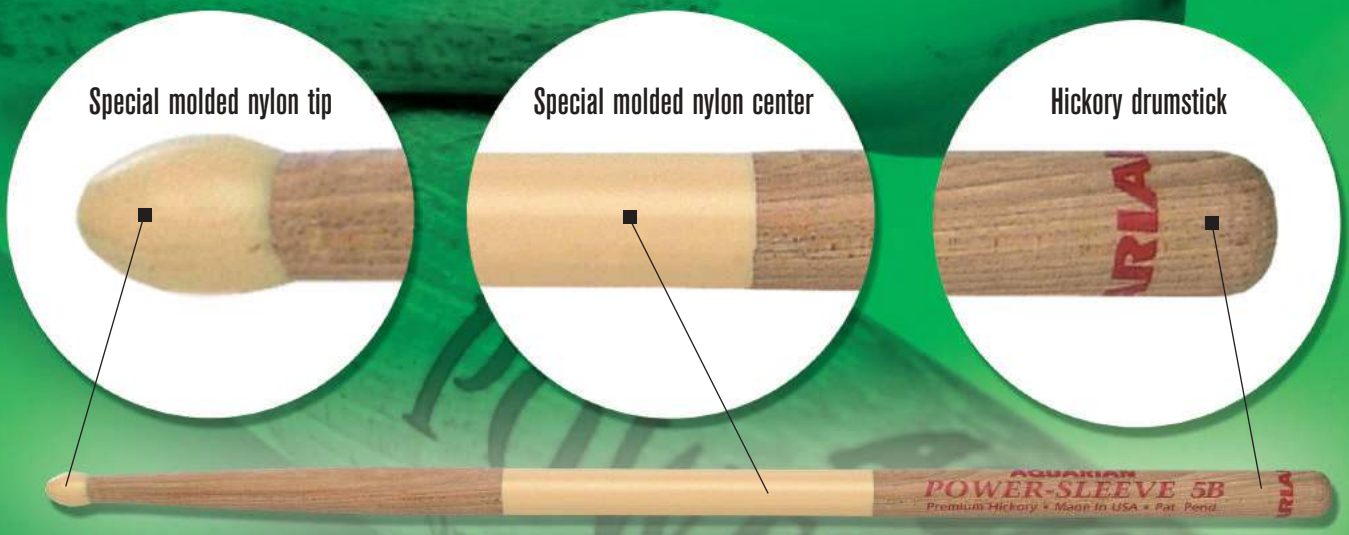

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Getting In Sync

How Coordinated Unison Drumming Can Sharpen Your Skills

by Chris Layton

MUSIC KEY

H.H.

S.D.

B.D.

Hello everyone, and welcome to my instructional column. Over the next few months, I' d like to share with you some of the things that have helped me over the years, be they specific drumming techniques that I' ve used in the recording studio or on stage, or simply an overall approach to playing certain grooves and patterns.

Reference Materials

Two invaluable books that I' ve relied on over the years are Jim Chapin' s Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer and George Lawrence Stone' s Stick Control For The Snare Drummer. Chapin' s book focuses on developing independence between the four limbs. (This concept is the opposite of my focus this month, but more on that in a minute.)

The first three pages of Stone' s book consist of two-bar 8th-note exercises that have been designed to systematically increase right-hand/left-hand coordination. At first glance, these exercises look monotonous because they' re just sticking patterns. Some drummers might look at that and say, " Oh, I know that stuff; it' s so simple." But it' s that simplicity that makes these patterns so valuable and essential. The idea is for each stroke to be exactly the same, as if it' s being played with one hand. This type of practice is a great way to expose any weaknesses or inconsistency in the balance between the two hands.

Stone recommends playing each one of his exercises twenty times before moving on to the next one. If you do that, you' ll notice a vast difference in your playing when comparing the first few run-throughs with the nineteenth or twentieth repetition. This type of practice also relates to getting an even tone out of your drums, which then affects the overall feeling of your groove.

Personal Experience

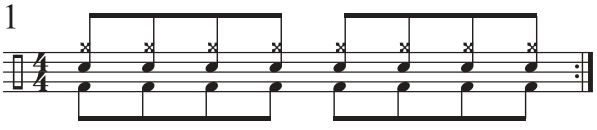
I grew up playing drums within a structured school environment. My band director gave me the thirteen essential rudiments and said, " Now go home, learn all of these, and I' ll see you later." As much as I value the study of rudiments, the paradox is that so many of my favorite drummers from the classic blues era—such as groove masters Freddie Below, Odie Payne, and Willie " Big Eyes" Smith—didn' t play anything that resembled a rudiment. They just played music.

My point is that, regardless of the route that you take, the goal is to achieve a balance in your playing. This brings us to the subject of this month' s column, which is something I refer to as " coordinated unison" drumming. Coordinated unison drumming is the opposite of standard alternating stick patterns. As opposed to playing something different with each hand or foot, all of the limbs are doing the exact same thing. So they' re totally locked-in. The only variations involve where the accents for each element are placed.

Coordinated Unison Grooves

Example 1 illustrates a drum pattern that uses two hands and one foot. The bass drum, snare, and hi-hat are played in straight 8th notes. The idea is for each element to sound even and in absolute synchronicity, with no accents whatsoever. Believe it or not, this is much harder to do than you might think. The goal is for the snare, kick drum, and hi-hat to meld into one sound. Start slowly, and then pick up the speed. You can also expand on the concept by including the left foot on the hi-hat pedal, so that all four limbs are hitting the 8th-notes simultaneously.

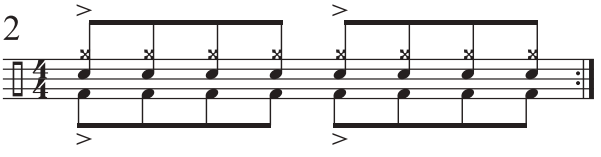
1



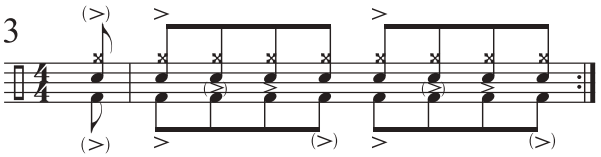
Once you' ve got that under control, experiment with the relationship between the limbs. In other words, create some " slop" within the groove by shifting the degree to which the parts are in sync with each other.

Once you feel confident about the spacing of your 8th notes, the next step is to apply accents. In Example 2, I' ve placed accents on the bass drum and hi-hat on beats 1 and 3, while continuing to play the 8th-note snare pattern without accents. Repeat this many times until you settle into a comfortable groove.

2

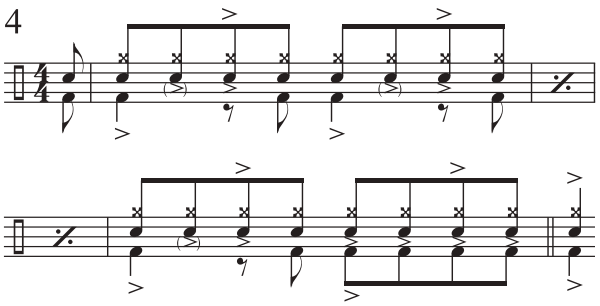


Now let' s add a few more accents to this coordinated-unison groove. In Example 3 (on the facing page), begin with a pickup on the bass drum, snare, and hi-hat. Slightly accent the bass drum and hi-hat to supply some push into the downbeat. The hi-hat accents in this figure are the same as in Example 2. The bass drum adds a slight accent on the upbeat of beats 2 and 4, with strong accents remaining on beats 1 and 3. The snare slightly accents the upbeats of beats 1 and 3, followed by strong accents on beats 2 and 4. Remember to keep all three elements sounding in absolute synchronicity as you apply the accents.



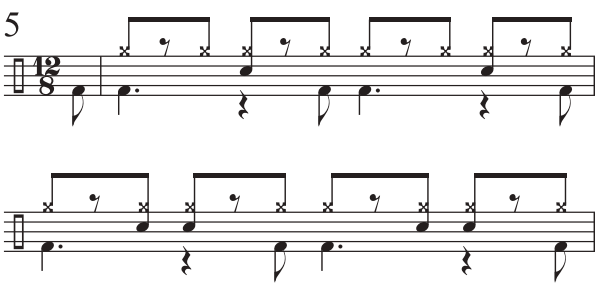
A pattern I've been asked about many times is the one I played on "Love Struck Baby," from the first Stevie Ray Vaughan & Double Trouble album, Texas Flood. For the studio recording, I used two hands to play the straight 8th-note snare pattern. When we played the song live, however, I switched to using just the left hand to play the straight 8ths on the snare, which enabled me to use my right hand to play straight 8ths on the hi-hat.

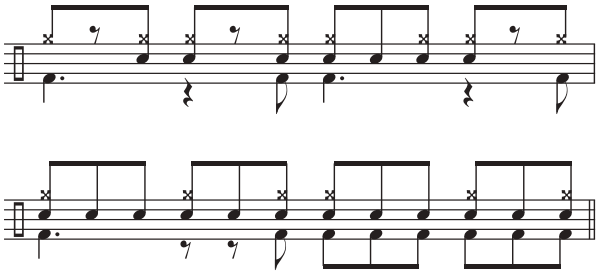
This is a perfect example of the coordinated unison concept in action. The hands are locked-in with steady 8th notes on the hi-hat and snare—with each hand accenting different parts of the beat—while the syncopated bass drum figures provide some swing to the groove. You can add more power to the pattern by making the bass drum note on the "&" of beat 2 a little stronger than the one on the upbeat of beat 4. When I get to the turnaround at the end of a section (measure 4), I use the coordinated unison idea by hitting all three elements in straight 8ths across the last two beats of the bar. This provides a crescendo as the music moves into the next section.



The last bar of Example 4 brings up the concept of playing accented 8th-note patterns on the snare drum with the left hand. This was an essential technique in the playing of all of the great blues, R&B, and soul drummers. A great example of this, as applied to a swinging 12/8 feel, is in Sam Lay's drum pattern on Howlin' Wolf's classic recording of "Love Me Darlin'," from the album Change My Way. I covered this song with Stevie Ray on the album In Step.

Example 5 illustrates the basic drum figure that I played on "Love Me Darlin'." At first glance it looks to be a simple rock 'n' roll beat with swinging 8th notes on the hi-hat. Notice, however, that as the groove progresses, the left hand subtly increases activity on the snare drum. I start with slight upbeat accents in bar 2, followed by 8th-note triplets on beat 3 of the third measure. I culminate the pattern with a triplet fill in bar 4, with the bass drum doubling the fill on beats 3 and 4.



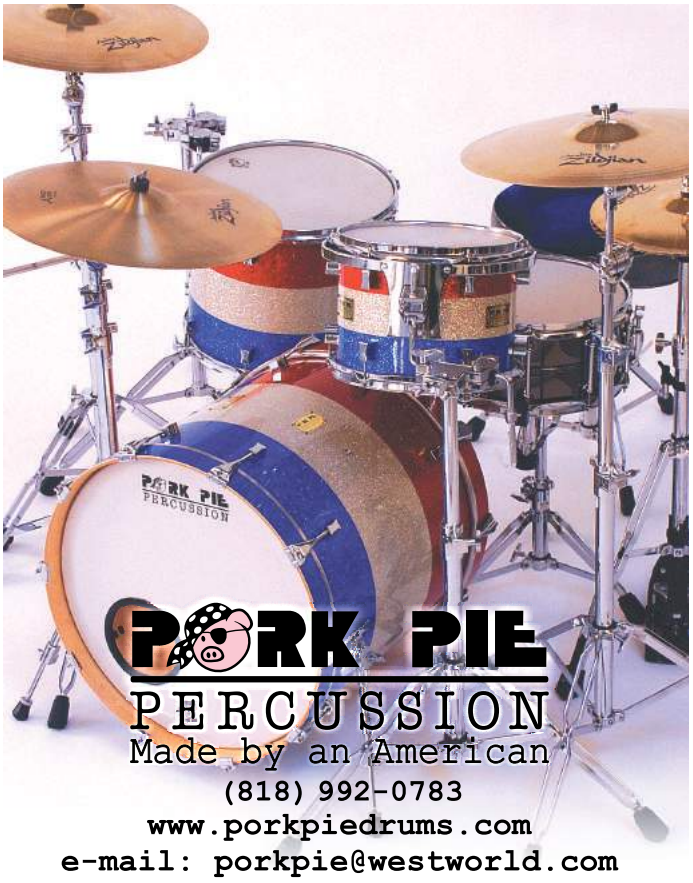


The first thing most drummers do when they play a fill is go to alternating patterns using both hands. However, the drummers on the old blues, R&B, and soul records always did those fills with one hand. (Or they didn't do them at all!) It's a very simple philosophy: If you need 16th notes on the hi-hat, play them with one hand so that the other hand is free to add the appropriate accents on the snare. As a result, the groove becomes tighter. This is the Clyde Stubblefield / James Brown concept in a nutshell.

Now that you have a grasp of the coordinated unison concept, you can apply it to just about anything that you play. There are endless variations of patterns where two or more elements must fall on the same part of a beat. And the clarity with which you perform this task greatly impacts the overall feel and musicality of the groove. A good starting point is to take all of the previous figures and experiment with accents on each element of the beat. Then experiment with leaving out different parts of the pattern, and listen to the results. Feel free to spice things up in order to get different flavors and textures. It's all about discovering the sounds that you like and the things that will best serve the music.

William Hawkins

Chris Layton has played with Stevie Ray Vaughan, Arcangels, Buddy Guy, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Larry Carlton, Storyville, Hubert Sumlin, and B.B. King.



Chopsbuilders

Corps-Style Exercises For All Drummers, Part 1

by Jim Casella

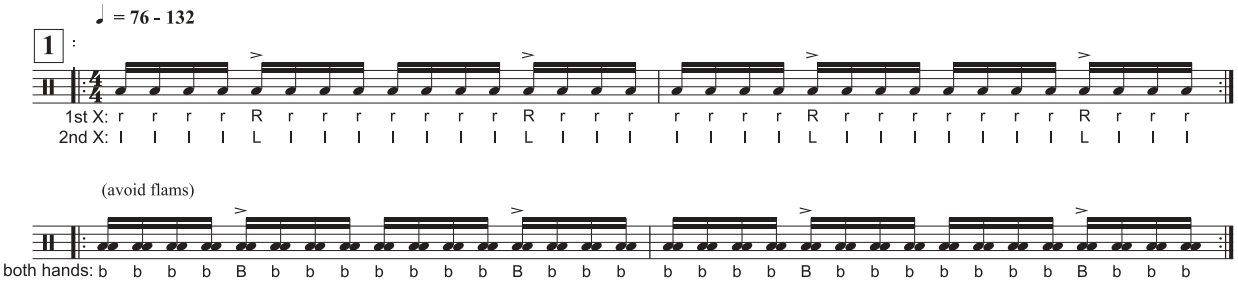
If there's one thing that drum corps drummers strive for, it's chops. Rudimental drumming has often carried with it the goal of measured physical achievement through the standard rudiments. While these rudiments are especially important for marching drummers, they also provide a valuable foundation for any drummer to build chops, develop rhythmic accuracy, and form muscle memory of musical ideas.

This two-part article comprises a collection of snare drum exercises that might be found in the drum corps parking lot. But don't worry, you won't have to lace up your parade shoes. These examples have a sense of groove and flow that make them valuable for any drummer. And not only will they help develop your chops, they'll encourage solid tempo control, accurate rhythmic interpretation, relaxed muscles, and an overall sense of perpetual motion and flow in your technique.

Many of these exercises can also be a good regimen for your double-bass chops. Whatever your goal, don't try to play them at tempos where you can't keep up. It's good to push yourself, but only to the point where you can still produce quality sounds. They should feel good to play, and they should be fun to listen to. Be sure to observe all repeats, and play each for extended periods of time.

Flow Strokes

This exercise looks basic on paper. It's not necessarily supposed to challenge the brain, but rather give your hands something continual to do as a warm-up. The hands should stay very relaxed. Don't squeeze the sticks too tightly (especially following accents), and listen for a consistent sound quality with each stroke. When you get to the double stops (both hands playing simultaneously), avoid any flamming. Play this exercise without stopping for around five minutes at a time.



Double/Triple Beat

Double- and triple-beat exercises are our rudimental bread & butter. Aim for a consistent accent sound that uses a balance of wrist/finger strokes and natural stick rebound. At slower tempos, the wrists play an active role in generating the second or third beats. At faster tempos, the fingers will do a little more of the work. In all cases, allow the sticks to rebound naturally. You want to achieve a relaxed, flowing sound, without any choppiness. Play this without stopping for at least five minutes.

Diddling Around

Paradiddles are some of the most commonly used rudiments. The following exercise uses a variety of diddle patterns to focus on the contrast between accents and taps (non-accents), and uninterrupted rhythmic flow. Again, allow the sticks to breathe in your hands by not squeezing too much. This will give you the best possible sound without muscle fatigue. Play it continuously for at least five minutes.

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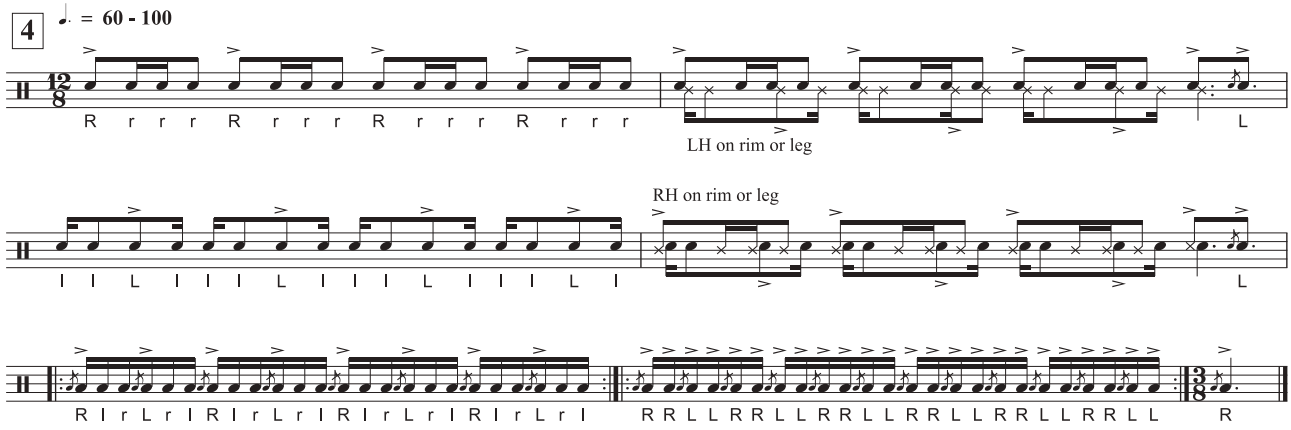
Flam Accent Breakdown

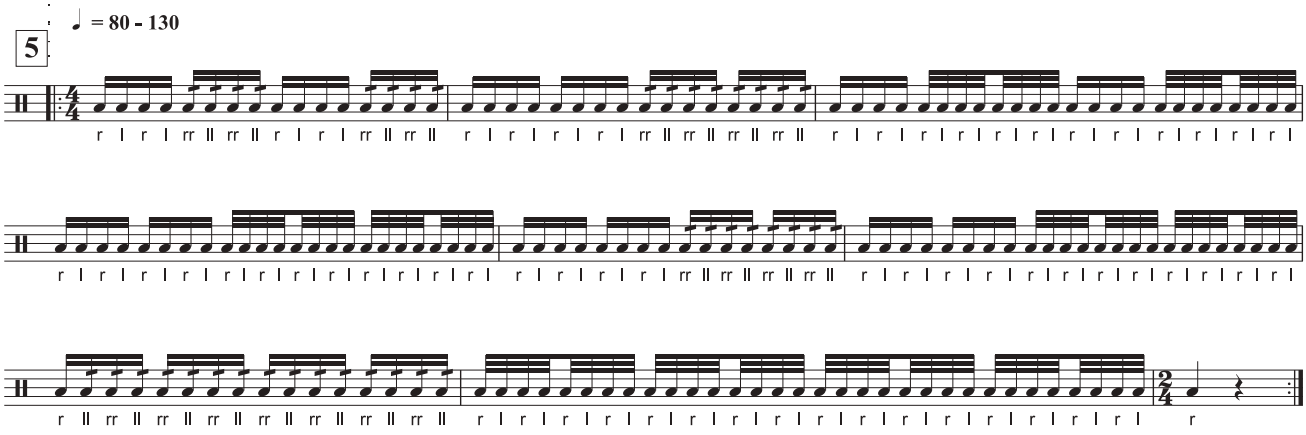
Flam accents and flam taps are two commonly used flam rudiments. Example 4 focuses on isolating the rhythm of each hand during flam accents. As with the previous exercises, the trick is to keep your grip from tensing up following accents, which is one of the most common tendencies among rudimental drummers.

The first few bars allow you to focus on the sound and flow of the isolated hand. Adding the second hand on the rim or leg gives you a kinesthetic point of reference to base the primary rhythm against. But the feel should not change when shifting from one hand to both. Playing flam accents and flam taps back to back for extended periods of time is a great warm-up.



Hugga Dugga Rolls And Singles

The first two bars of the next exercise comprise one of the most common drumline roll exercises. With double-stroke rolls we' re striving for two very even-sounding beats on each double stroke (or " diddle"). The twist here is to replicate the clear double stroke–roll rhythms using single-stroke rolls as well. As in all cases, rhythmic accuracy is paramount. Open rolls won' t sound their best if they' re not articulated properly.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The Nashville Number System

Part 1: The Breakdown

by Jim Riley

This article is a call-out to all of you working drummers out there. Have you ever had a ton of songs to learn but not a lot of time to prepare? Then this article is for you. Do you want to do recording sessions? This article is for you, too. What's it all about? The Nashville number system.

The Nashville number system is a fast, accurate, and musical method for charting songs. Almost every chart used in Nashville recording sessions is a number chart. So if you want to play sessions, you'll need to understand how they work.

Number charts completely replace the chicken-scratch cheat sheets that many of us have used to get through unfamiliar gigs. The biggest problem with those types of charts is that only *you* can understand them. And even if you could explain them to another drummer, your notes give you no frame of reference with the rest of the band. However, if you learn to read and write number charts, you'll find that instead of counting bars, you'll actually be *listening* to the other musicians.

The Premise

The first thing you need to know about number charts is that each number refers to a scale degree. Instead of "Do-Re-Mi-Fa-So-La-Ti-Do," we substitute "1-2-3-4-5-6-7-1." But why use numbers when you can use the letters that represent the actual notes? Well, the problem with writing a chart based on note names is that a C is always a C. Therefore, if you write the entire chart in the key of C, and then the singer wants to raise the key to F, you have to write a new chart. When you use numbers, if you're in C, then C=1, D=2, and so on. However, if the key of C is too low, and you move to the key of F, then F=1, G=2, etc. In other words, when you write the chart with numbers, it can be played in *any* key.

Breaking It Down

Now let's dig into the structure of number charts. When you see a number standing alone, you can assume that that chord is played for one measure. Take a look at the four-bar sequence below, and you'll see what I mean.

The sequence is telling you to play one bar of the 1 chord, one bar of the 4 chord, one bar of the 1 chord, and one bar of the 5 chord. All of the chords are assumed to be major unless otherwise notated. (You can download mp3s of the progressions in this article at the Education page of www.moderndrummer.com.)

(Audio Example 1)

Minor chords are notated with a "-" following the number, like this:

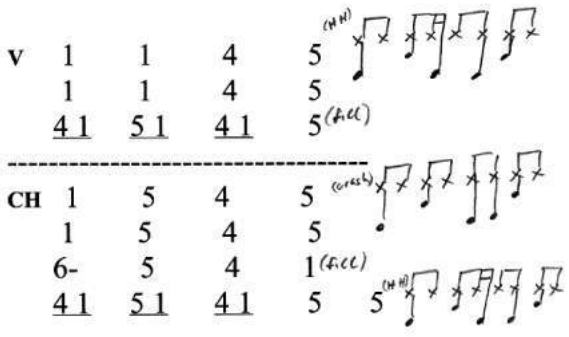
2-

You can also easily notate accidentals (sharps and flats). The symbol "#" raises the note a half step, and "b" lowers it a half step.

If you see two or more numbers underlined, then they occur in the same measure. This is referred to as a "split bar." In the following example, the 1 chord is played for two beats, the 4 chord is played for two beats, the minor 2 chord is played for two beats, and the 5 chord is played for two beats (assuming that the song is in 4/4 time, of course).

(Audio Example 2)

Number charts are written in phrases, and those phrases are grouped into sections. The sections are represented with a "V" for the verse and a "CH" for the chorus. Here's a typical verse/chorus progression written using the number system. (Audio Example 3)



The song's sections are separated with a line to make them easier to identify. Notice how the form of the sections jumps out at you. At a glance, you can see that there are three four-bar phrases in the verse and the last phrase in the chorus is five bars long. To the right of each section, I've written out the drum patterns. This is a very helpful way to remember your parts in live and studio situations. Always use a pencil for personal notes. At recording sessions, bass drum patterns are frequently changed based on the producer's preference.

While many traditional notation symbols are used in number

charts (like repeat signs), there are shorthand symbols unique to this system as well. One such symbol is a diamond (◇), which is drawn around a number when you' re supposed to play a whole note. As a drummer, you' ll usually interpret this as a unison bass drum / crash cymbal hit on the first beat of that measure.

Here' s a chart with whole notes notated in the second phrase.

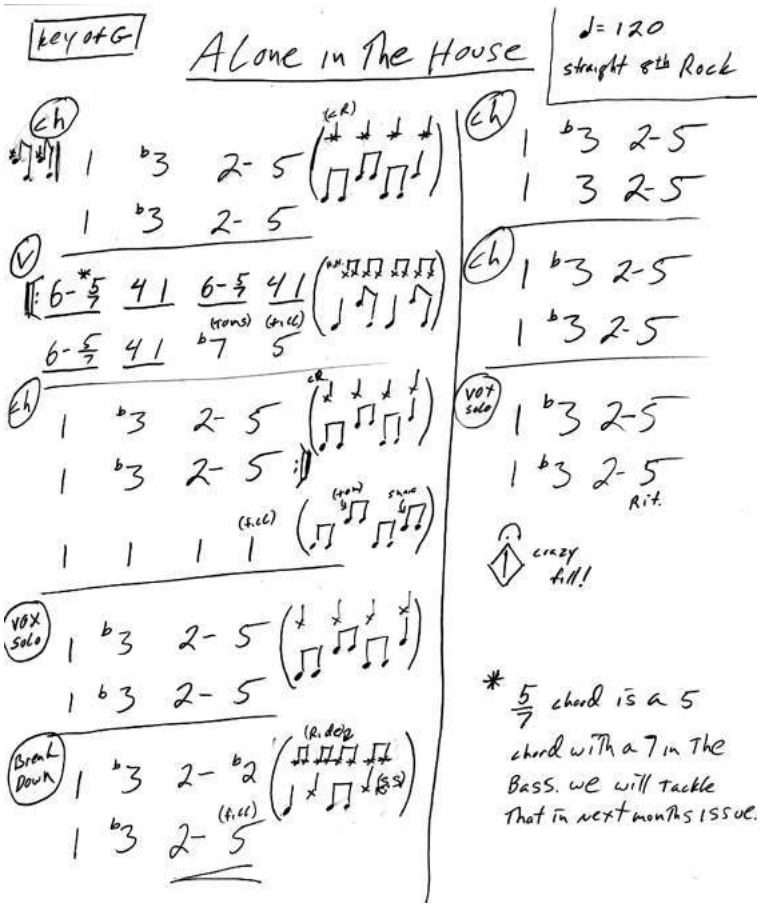
(Audio Example 4)

Another frequently used symbol is the rooftop symbol, " ^" . When this symbol is placed over a number, play a short note

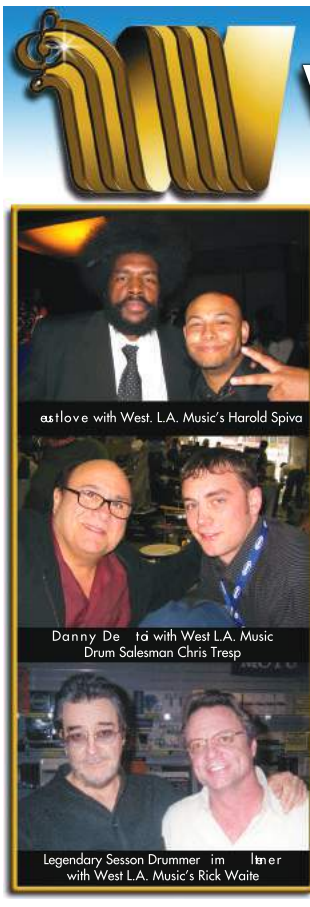
Here' s the same progression as before, this time using short notes in the second phrase.
(Audio Example 5)

Even though the previous two progressions (Audio Examples 4 and 5) use the same numbers, the symbols radically change how the phrases sound. In our next installment, I' ll share several more shorthand symbols that are used to create accurate number charts.

In the meantime, on the top of the next column you' ll see a complete handwritten chart that I made for a recent session. (You can download an mp3 of the song at www.moderndrummer.com.) The first thing you should notice is how clear the form of the song is when written in numbers. Don' t get me wrong; traditional notation charts are great for transcriptions and rhythmically challenging music. But when it comes to *songs*, these number charts are much quicker to write and easier to navigate. When you' re reading a number chart, you' ll find yourself thinking less about what rhythms to play and more about the music. And that' s a good thing!



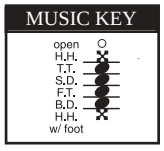
Jim Riley is the drummer and bandleader for Rascal Flatts, an active session drummer, and a freelance producer. He also teaches privately and performs several clinics throughout the year.



Hands, Grooves, And Fills

A Complete Curriculum

by Pat Petrillo



It' s always a challenge to divide practice time wisely so that you get the most out of it. Perhaps your routine goes something like this: First you warm up with a few rudiments that you "sort of" know, and then you jump into a series of complex grooves. Finally, you try to cop some hot licks from a new DVD. Or maybe you sit down to focus on one thing, but you don' t have an organized plan of attack for how to practice it. Then before you know it..time' s up!

This series of articles is designed to help make your practicing more productive. My goal is to provide insights into improving three facets of your playing that are very important to becoming a better musician:

1) Smooth hand technique, coordination, and a rudimental foundation.

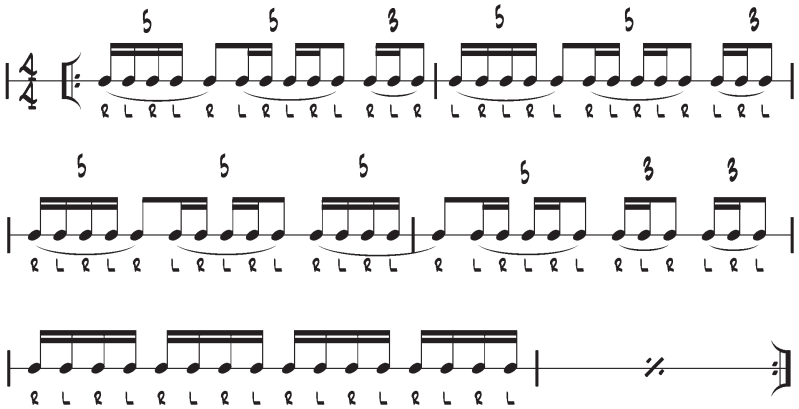
2) A vocabulary of groove variations that' s creative and usable.

3) A repertoire of interesting fills, from simple to complex.

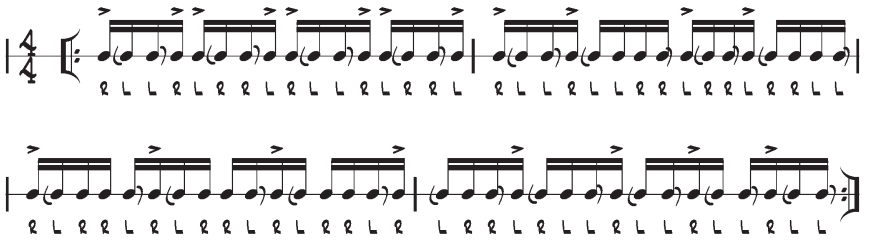
Although it seems like I' m trying to fit ten pounds of bricks in a five-pound bag, the fact is you can and should be working on these three things simultaneously. After many years of giving master classes and clinics around the globe, and from teaching at Drummers Collective, I' ve fine-tuned my methodology to address these three topics. So let' s get started!

Hands

The first way to improve hand technique is to develop equality between the hands. The following exercise is a great warm-up that alternates between five- and three-note groupings, which will help develop coordination and improve your single strokes. As you' re practicing this exercise, it' s important to relax and allow the sticks to rebound. And remember: Repetition is the key to developing endurance. Repeat the exercise numerous times at one tempo. Then increase your metronome in ten-click increments until you "feel the burn." You want to max out at your fastest tempo, and hold it there for a few minutes.



I call the next exercise "inversations" because it uses inversions and variations of diddle stickings. This exercise contains phrasing ideas that will help with your overall dexterity. Treat the diddles as ghost notes—keeping them low, soft, and flowing—while emphasizing the accents. You can orchestrate this pattern on the drumset by putting the accents on the toms, while leaving the other notes on the snare.

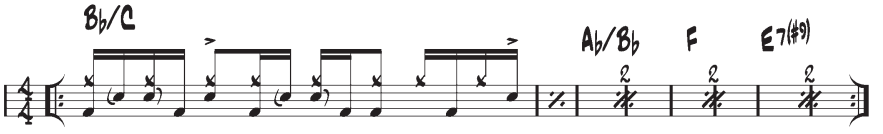


Grooves

Everything you perform with a group should be dictated by the music. The following ghost-note grooves emphasize specific phrasing ideas that are inspired by what' s happening musically within the rhythm section. You' ll hear what I mean when you jam along to the tracks, which can be downloaded at the " Education" page of www.moderndrummer.com.

Groove #1: " Neo Soul"

Our first groove focuses on a common method of ghost-note playing that I call the " Diddle In The Middle" concept, where two ghost notes are dropped between two bass drum hits. In this groovy track, the syncopation in the bass line dictates the ghosting in the snare part. The vibe of the music is smooth. So relax, and let the diddles bounce.



Groove #2: " Jam Band"

This track also has a diddle in the middle ghosting, with added syncopation on the snare. Ghost notes that occur directly after an accent are tough to keep soft, so be careful. Also, add color to this groove by playing 8th notes or offbeats on the bell of the ride over quarter notes in the hi-hat foot.

Groove #3: " Nawlins' Funk"

Now let' s apply the diddle ghosting concept to a swing feel. The following example is a two-bar groove with strategically placed diddles to add color and movement. All 16th notes should be played with a loose triplet feel. The challenge is to make the diddles swing consistently. Again, try some different ride-cymbal variations.

Fills

A producer once told me, " Pat, play a fill going into the bridge," which I did. But that was immediately followed with, " No, not *that* fill!" So, my advice is to work on a variety of fills—from simple to complex—in order to be ready to play whatever is needed at any moment. With that in mind, here are some fill ideas that involve split 16th-note movements and drags.

Fill #1: Split 16th Notes, Movement A

By splitting 16th notes between the hands and the bass drum, many interesting orchestrations can be created that will work great for fills and grooves. The next example (on the following page) starts with the bass, followed by two 16th notes in the hands.

Fill #2: Split 16th Notes, Movement B

Now let' s start with the snare, followed by the kick on the " e." Do simple, logical orchestrations of this pattern before moving them around the kit at random.

Fill #3: Drag, Movement A

Drag combinations are very common and can be used as an alternative to accented 16th notes. The drag adds color without sounding too busy.

Fill #4: Drag, Movement B

Now let' s change the sticking and shift the drag to different parts of the 16th-note pattern.

These examples represent a few ways that you can improve your hands, grooves, and fills simultaneously. In addition to downloading the playalong tracks, you can watch video clips of each example at www.moderndrummer.com. See you next time!

Pat Petrillo is a faculty member at Drummers Collective in New York City. He's played with Gloria Gaynor, Patti LaBelle, and Glen Burtnik, and he's drummed for numerous Broadway shows. Pat is also an active clinician. His new multi-media instructional package, *Hands, Grooves, & Fills*, is available through Hal Leonard/Hudson Music. For more on Pat, visit www.patpetrillo.com.

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Defeating Your Demons

How To Deal With Performance Pressure

by Monty Sneddon

Have you ever wondered why you never seem to play as well as you know you can? Do you find yourself making mistakes during performances that you' d never make in the rehearsal room? Do you sometimes feel as though you' re pulling your drumsticks through molasses?

Most drummers have experienced these sensations at some point in their playing careers. But why do these things happen? Most of us just put it down to " nerves," and leave it at that. But is there more to it? This article investigates the phenomenon known as " performance pressure" : what it is, how it affects us, and—most importantly—how we can control it, rather than letting it control us.

Defining Terms

Performance pressure affects all performers to some extent. Different situations and environments cause varying levels of anxiety—which, if left unchecked, can lead to serious degradation in that performer' s ability.

Whenever we sit down to play the drums in public, either on stage or in the studio, we naturally wish to play to the best of our ability. Accordingly, we place pressure on ourselves to fulfill our expectations—and, likely, those of our employer. The greater the importance we place on a given situation, the more pressure we place upon ourselves. But often, the more pressure we experience, the less able we are to live up to our expectations. It becomes a vicious circle.

Referring to my own experiences, as well as to information gained from books and research papers and from talking to other performers over the years, I' ve compiled a short list of the most common fears that performers seem to face. These include: 1) doubting their own ability, 2) feeling that they haven' t practiced enough, 3) concern that they won' t be able to hear themselves properly, and 4) worry that others won' t like their playing.

I' m sure that one or more items on this list will pertain to you. You might also have some specific fears that aren' t shown here. Performance pressure is a very personal experience, and different factors cause it to appear in different people. My own personal demons, which I struggled with for many years, were worrying about what other people thought of my playing, and an overall fear of failure. After speaking to other performers, I discovered that these particular demons were pretty common.

Trying Too Hard

As drummers, we spend countless hours practicing various movements—hand techniques, coordination patterns, and specific fills—to the point where they become natural, autonomous movements that require little or no conscious thought. However, as our level of performance pressure increases, we begin to question our very ability to perform. We lose trust in ourselves, and subsequently we begin to consciously monitor everything we do. Ironically this very act of monitoring is what actually causes our performance to suffer. Due to the interference of our conscious mind, we create opportunities for mistakes to occur in our playing.

Illustration by Jeff Harrity

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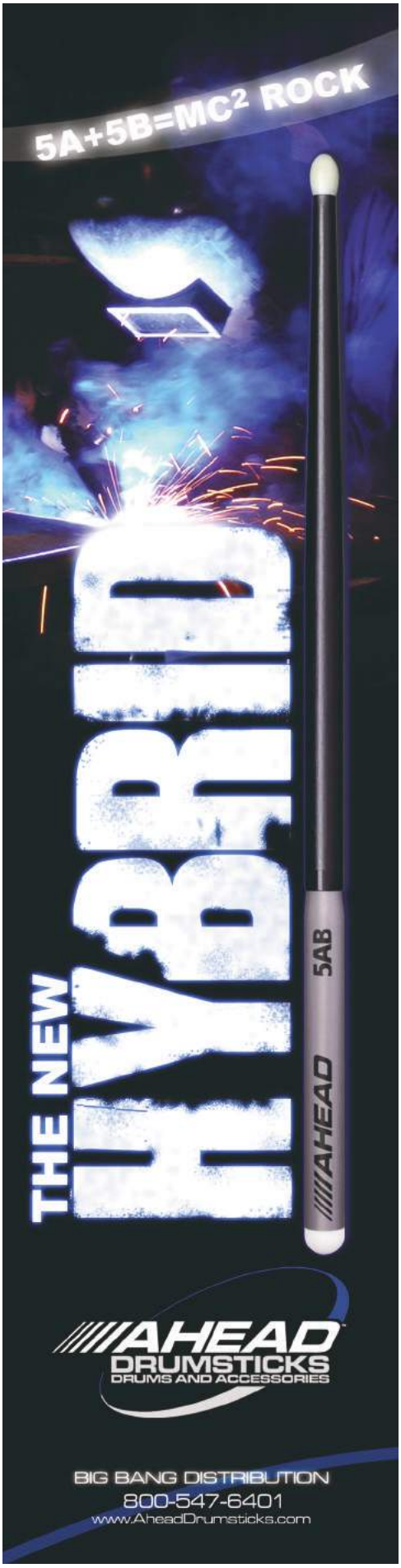


PERFORMANCE PRESSURE

Think back to when you were learning something new. How often did you find yourself finally coming to grips with the new material and playing it correctly, only for it to fall apart as soon as you started to consciously analyze what you were doing? This is exactly what happens during a performance when you begin to think about what you' re doing. Movements that are usually performed smoothly at a subconscious level are now consciously broken down into their component parts. Unfortunately, things are moving too fast for the conscious mind to string these now-disjointed movements together. As a result, mistakes occur, and you wind up playing at a level far below your true potential. You' re basically sabotaging your own performance.

A Few Solutions

Now that we have a grasp of what performance pressure is and why performers suffer from it, let' s look at what can be done to help control it.

One method is to continually remind yourself to trust in your own abilities. This is easy to suggest, but difficult to implement, since it requires a change in the way you think. When I went through this process, I constantly had to reassure myself that I' d put in hours of practice on my instrument, and had been at all the band rehearsals. So what was I worried about?

Playing live or in the studio is really no different from playing in rehearsals. True, you now have people watching you perform, but you' re still playing the same parts. If you keep reminding yourself of this, eventually the pressure will abate and performing will become easier. (Just realize that it' s not likely to happen overnight.)

Another useful change in thinking is simply allowing yourself to make mistakes. If you make a mistake in the studio, just stop the track and do it again—or punch in a corrected part later. Remember Franklin D. Roosevelt' s famous quote, " The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." The fear of making a mistake is usually far more harmful than the mistake itself.

Every Breath You Take

Another technique that I use to combat performance pressure is a breathing exercise I borrowed from my martial arts training. I use this before I go on stage or start to record.

The first thing to do is breathe in through your nose while counting to four. Make sure you fill your lungs all the way from the bottom to the top. To help visualise this, imagine the air entering through your nose, rising up over the top of your head, running down your spine, and finally filling your lungs from the bottom up. Your stomach should look as though it is inflating like a balloon.

Next, hold your breath for a count of four. This allows the oxygen contained in the air to move out into the lungs and from there into the blood stream. Finally, breathe out fully, again counting to four as you do. Make sure to exhale all of the used air from your lungs. Most people find this last step quite difficult, as they are not used to completely expelling all the air that their lungs can store.

If you initially find it difficult to use the four-second cycle, try starting with two seconds. After you feel comfortable with that, move on to a three-second cycle, and finally to the four-second cycle.

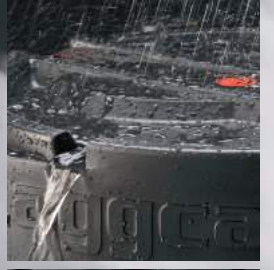
Repeat all of the above steps several times. You should find that your heart rate decreases significantly, which, in turn, causes your body to physically relax. As this occurs, you should feel less nervous.

Play!

The last thing I recommend for dealing with performance pressure is simply getting out and playing as often as possible, whether live or in the studio. Enjoy the experience of playing, and don' t get hung up on the technicalities. Music is about interacting with other people and enjoying yourself. Also, the more you' re exposed to stressful situations, the easier it' ll become to handle them. And the easier it becomes, the more enjoyable it becomes.

If you' re interested in researching the topic of performance pressure in more detail, I recommend that you read The Inner Game Of Music by Barry Green with Timothy Gallwey. Though the book is written with classical musicians in mind, all of the exercises and information it contains can easily be applied to musicians playing in the contemporary medium.

There' s also a wealth of information on the Internet pertaining to athletes and the issues they have with performance pressure, most of which is also relevant to musicians. In the meantime, I hope that the information presented here helps you to control any performance pressure you may be suffering from—and keep it from controlling you.



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Cajon For Drumset Players

Kit In A Box

by John Sparrow

If you can't play one drum, you aren't gonna be able to play four." My dad's words resonate through my head each time I think about technique.

I had the fortunate experience of having my drum mentor in-house 24/7. A self-taught drummer himself, Pop had climbed the ranks in the local music scene in the '60s and '70s, earning himself a highlight gig with polka king Frankie Yankovick in the '70s. My first six weeks as a fledgling drummer were spent on my dad's '60s Rogers Dynasonic in the middle of the family room learning the double-stoke roll. After that, I cut my teeth working with polka bands, jazz groups, and Elvis impersonators while doing van tours with my art-rock trio The Danglers. I ate, slept, and breathed drums and drumset.

I had often seen traditional percussionists play, but I just couldn't relate, and I was pretty sure I wasn't going to be Buddy Rich playing doumbek, congas, or bongos. My dad's advice was, "Just keep time, and they'll call you back." I worked really hard, and my profile slowly elevated. Then things took an interesting turn....

The Deep End

Three years ago I became a member of Shakuhachi Club MKE, a group led by Shakuhachi master and legendary bass player of Violent Femmes, Brian Ritchie. Brian called one day and asked me to stop by. In Brian's living room he had a corner filled with musical instruments from all over the world, and looming in the foreground was a bass cajon. I recognized the instrument (I read Modern Drummer cover to cover, so I know what's up!) and Brian had often asked if I could play a cajon. I always answered, "I'm sure I could." This day, however, he asked me to try it out.

So I sat down and started playing a simple rock beat. Brian then picked up his acoustic bass and started pounding out Violent Femmes songs. Violent Femmes were a big a part of my teen years, so you can understand the thoughts going through my head. After a few suggestions, jamming, and conversation, Brian handed me a piece of paper with three dates written down. "We leave next week," he said. I packed up the cajon and went home to learn the instrument and twenty-five years' worth of material.

In The Beginning There Was The Box

Cajon, which means "box" in Spanish, is often associated with the countries of Peru and Cuba. It is said that slaves from Africa were not allowed to bring drums with them while being taken to the "New World," so they would use fish crates or fruit boxes as a substitute. The instrument's sound and construction evolved over time into an enclosed box with a port hole and various metallic items placed inside it for snare or rattle effects. Today, to accommodate various styles of music, the cajon is available in many styles, shapes, and sizes.

Basic Sounds

There are two basic sounds you can achieve on a cajon: bass, and snare (or "crash") tone. Crash in this case is not used in the traditional cymbal sense, but in a snare-sound sense. A player might use different techniques to achieve different sounds, depending on the desired effect. In my case, I'm playing rock music, so I need to achieve a good bass drum sound and a snare beat.

The challenge here is not to play tra-

Innovative approaches to the basic cajon design are being employed by (clockwise, from top) De Gregorio, Schlagwerk, and Meinl, among other companies.

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ditional right-hand ride patterns (I' m right-handed) that I would use on the hi-hat or ride, but just to stick with the bass drum patterns. With my fingers pointed back and spread a bit, and using the inside of my palm, I play slightly off center to obtain a sweet bass drum sound (Fig. 1 on page 134). Like any drum, avoid playing directly in the middle or you may choke the sound of the instrument.

To obtain a snare or " crash" tone, I strike on the top left corner (Fig. 2) with a whip-

MAKE THE CAJON ROCK! by Brian Ritchie

Violent Femmes' noted multi-instrumentalist makes the case for "getting square."

Dr. Varuni Kulasekera

I first encountered the cajon on a scientific trip to the Peruvian Amazon my wife led for the American Museum Of Natural History. In a strange case of reverse exoticism, the local musicians dug jamming with me on rock 'n' roll in addition to the Latin standards. We switched instruments all night, and as soon as I touched the cajon and played "I Saw Her Standing There," I realized its potential as a rock instrument.

I really didn't feel limited in any way by this simple box—in fact, I found it more intuitive, and the dynamics easier to control, than a conventional drumkit. The cajon is renowned as a Latin instrument, but Latin music has a cornucopia of sounds to choose from, whereas rock has been subject to a percussion monoculture for the last fifty years. Here was something that was simple (anybody can play it), can be afforded by almost any musician (or you can make your own), light, portable, stays out of the way of the vocal and lead instruments, and is visually striking. It's funky, street, and unpretentious. In other words, a blast of fresh air in the world of rock rhythm.

I am Violent Femmes' bassist by trade, but I get a lot of calls to do small gigs from other bands and artists. I don't want to do those on bass—I get enough of that with The Femmes—so I was doing a lot of those as a drummer. When I brought back a cajon from Peru, I started showing up to these gigs in New York and San Francisco with it, but was a bit apprehensive that people would dismiss it as a gimmick. On the contrary, the bandleaders were thrilled and said it was better than when I used conventional drums, in fact better than any drums they had ever played with.

Nobody asked me to go back to drums and cymbals. The audience likewise was astonished by the full sound that came out of it, and came up to me after every gig saying things like, "You make that one box sound like a whole drumset" or "I couldn't believe all the sounds you got out of that thing." I knew I was on to something. And I could take it on the subway!

So I decided to add cajon to the Femmes' percussion lineup. Our other drummer, Victor DeLorenzo, plays snare and a cymbal with brushes, so we added bass cajon to provide the elements usually found in the bass drum and toms. When I called John Sparrow to my house and showed him what I wanted, I could tell he was highly skeptical and wanted to underestimate the instrument. But after a few gigs with The Femmes and the response he was getting from the fans and other musicians, he was converted.

Due to the immediacy of playing with hands, John was able to lock in with my bass better than any kit drummer ever did. Now I'll never go back to a conventional drumset if the situation is under my control. Been there, done that, let's move on! The cajon is the percussion instrument of the future, and I predict a large percentage of drummers in all forms of pop music will be using them within twenty years.

Brian will be heard playing a De Gregorio bass cajon on the forthcoming CD from Italian band Zen Circus, Villa Inferno. •

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Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

ping stroke using my fingertips. Tom sounds are achieved by moving inward from the snare corner (Fig. 3) toward the center of the playing surface. The closer you play to the center of the cajon, the more the tones will resemble those of tom-toms.

Keep in mind that cajons are usually made in smaller sizes for Peruvian music, but for rock I recommend and play bass cajon, which measures 50cm x 50cm x 30cm. I feel it' s easier to get a little sound from a big cajon than to get a big sound from a little cajon.

Working It In

The Violent Femmes are known for their acoustic punk sound. Drummer Victor DeLorenzo is known for his unique style, playing only brushes on a lone snare drum to punk rock music. There is the occasional use of a floor tom, or his personal invention, the tranceaphone. But when people think of Femmes drumming, they think of the sound of the snare and brushes. This is why I avoid any ride patterns that may clutter or interfere with Victor' s swinging style.

Brian' s first instructions to me were to play exactly what Victor was playing—no fills, no frills. I needed to concentrate on filling the bass drum void and locking in with Brian' s Ernie Ball acoustic bass–driven bass lines. The writing is on the wall as to why the cajon is being used here: It fills the bass drum void and beefs up the 2 and 4.

In Practice

For this article I' m going to use two of Violent Femmes' most famous songs from their first, self-titled release to explain my approach to their music. (Be sure to check out musical examples of these on my Web site: www.johnsparrow.net/MUSIC.htm.)

" Prove My Love" has one of the most famous drum hooks in rock music, and is often referred to as " the Femmes beat." Since the beat focuses primarily on the snare, I simply lock my right hand in with Brian' s funky bass line and left hand backbeats with Gordon Gano' s unshakable rhythm guitar playing. Live, Victor is known for putting on a theatrical show with funny faces and improvisational acting and dancing. So it becomes especially important that I am solid with the groove for the band and crowd to hang their ears on.

My second example, " Gone Daddy Gone," features Brian Ritchie on xylophone and Jeff Hamilton on electric bass. Victor gives me one of his four-bar breaks in the instrumental section of the song, which adds a new dimension for me. In the original recording the break incorporates Scotch bass drum hits as well as snare hits, so I simulate those tones by utilizing the lower register of the cajon. The area between the corner used for snare and the off-center area for bass drum is where I obtain those sounds (Fig. 3). These trades are much like jazz trades and require me to play with more of a drumset approach, which is no problem on the cajon.

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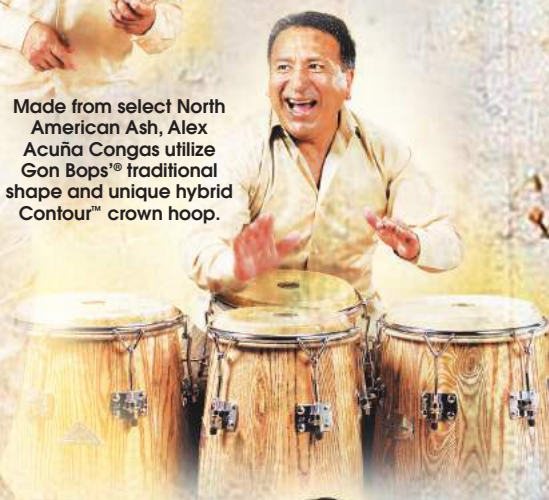

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Gon Bops congratulates Alex Acuña on being voted #1 Percussionist in the Modern Drummer 2007 Readers Poll.

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The cajon has this flexibility and tonal range.

Not For Femmes Only

Maybe some of you are thinking, "Well, that's all great, but I'm in a rock band...how does this apply to me?" I often sit in with other artists that play rock and various other styles of music. In a lot of clubs, drums are just too big of a sound. (Believe me, I've had the police called on my bands many times!) A cajon can help your band keep a gig and help you keep your gig.

I often get comments from rock bands that I sit in with that they don't even notice that the traditional drum sound is missing, and that they in fact prefer the warm sound that the cajon emits. In studio settings, engineers try to obtain a warm bass sound from a bass drum with compression, various mics, and effects. With a cajon the tone is there naturally. I can approach any rock song by Led Zeppelin or The Killers the same way as I do the Femmes' material. Another advantage of the cajon is that it's one instrument with no moving parts or accessories. You pack up a cajon and play the gig, and when the gig is done, pack it up and go home. Nice, huh? No trap case, cymbal-bag, or extra headaches.

Find Out More

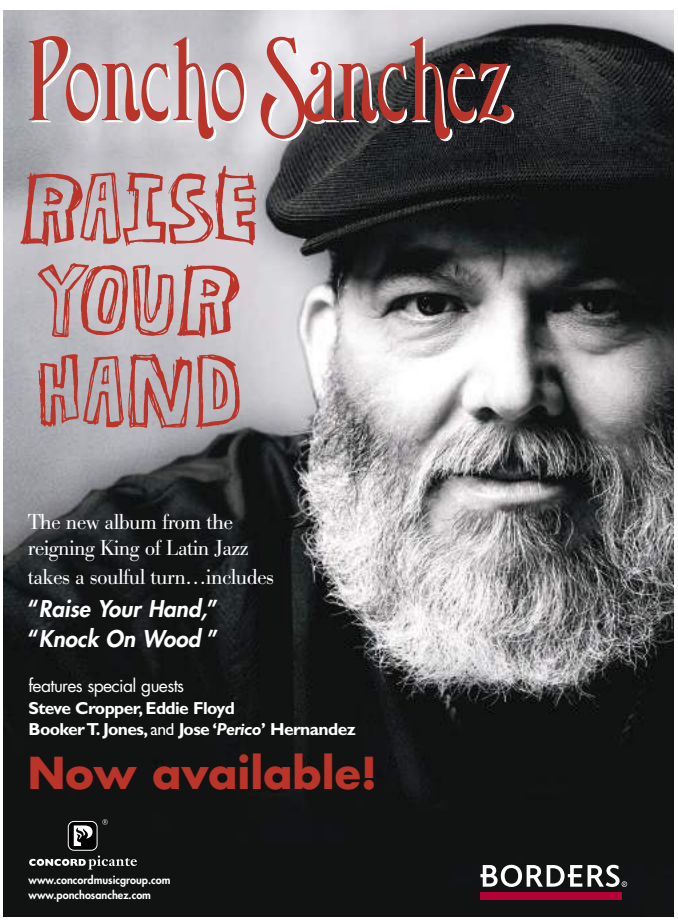
If you decide you want to explore cajon music, there are many resources out there. In 2006 I recorded two CDs with Shakuhachi Club MKE. Each CD includes cajon playing in styles of rock, jazz, free improvisation, and even Latin and African-tinged feels. (Check out www.myspace.com/tairakubrianritchie.) Violent Femmes also will be releasing a CD (Archive Series #4) recorded live in Milwaukee, which features my playing as well.

You can also check out a great video performance that inspires me, by British artist Tom Chapman, at www.myspace.com/tcjazz. Tom is another drumset player who discovered the multiple possibilities of the cajon. And a documentary is in the works by cajon maker De Gregorio, featuring players like Hamid Drake and Stewart Copeland. View the preview at www.cajondg.com.

And if you page through Modern Drummer you'll see many of the companies that are making quality cajons, such as Meinl, Toca, LP, Fat Congas, De Gregorio, Kotz, and Schlagwerk.

I hope that this article makes you take a different look at percussion, specifically the cajon. I have to admit I wasn't always big on percussion instruments and never really tried to play them seriously. The first day I played the cajon in Brian Ritchie's apartment was a very important one for me. I was not only given the opportunity of a lifetime career-wise, I was given a chance to look at percussion in a whole new way. I'm truly enjoying my experience with the cajon, and I hope I've inspired you to check it out as well.

John Sparrow is currently on a world tour with '80s cult heroes Violent Femmes, with whom he plays percussion, specifically the cajon, and is a permanent member. While not on the road he finds time to play with zen jazz group Shakuhachi Club MKE and does local session work. For more on John, go to www.johnsparrow.net.



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Going Mobile

Creating A Laptop-Based Studio For Drummers

by Michael Dawson

Thinking about setting up a personal studio where you can record tracks, build loops, and create sequences in your bedroom, at the hotel, or even on the gig? Well, there are essentially three pieces of gear—aside from your drums and a few decent mics—that you' ll need to get going: a high-powered laptop, versatile music software, and a professional audio interface.

Apples And Oranges

The first thing you have to decide in order to get your mobile studio up and running is the type of laptop you' re going to use. There have been countless arguments over which is better, a Mac or a PC. But it really comes down to preference. If you have limited computer experience, then you should probably go with what you' re most familiar with. That way you don' t frustrate yourself by having to learn too many things at once. Figuring out how to work new recording software and audio devices, while also having to get used to a new computer platform, is a recipe for disaster.

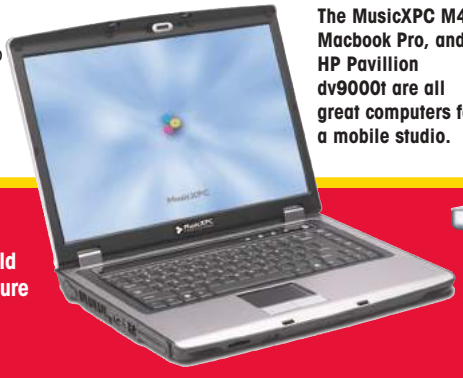
If you have a decent amount of computer skill, and you' re not partial to one platform over the other, then you should spend some time researching the options for Macs and for PCs. There are benefits to each. You just have to figure out which one best fits your interests and your budget.

In the Mac world, you have a couple of options. If you have the cash (around $3,000), you can buy a brand-new 17" MacBook Pro that' ll handle most of your music making needs with minimal fuss. If you want to save some bread, you can usually find a refurbished MacBook Pro or PowerBook at a considerable discount from www.apple.com. Just be sure to check that the specs on these machines are adequate for what you need. (See sidebar: Get The Specs.) Also consider purchasing an extended warranty, just in case the computer decides to fail after a year or so.

The strength of Macs is in their power, reliability, and ease of use. They' re very stable computers, which is crucial, especially if you plan to use them on gigs. For those reasons, most audio professionals prefer them in the studio and on stage. Plus, all Macs with the OSX operating system come with a software bundle called iLife, which includes the surprisingly powerful and versatile audio program GarageBand. This program has everything you' d need to get started. So even if initially you only have enough money to buy the computer, you can still do a lot of cool things, like recording live tracks using the Mac' s built-in mic, creating layers of percussion and sound effects using GarageBand' s extensive loop library, or producing original music with the included software instruments.

On the PC side, you have a lot more options to explore. Not only are there a variety of major brands that offer great multimedia laptops (like Dell, HP, Gateway, etc.), there are also several custom manufacturers whose computers have been specially configured for recording and other audio applications, like MusicXPC and Rain.

If you decide to go with a custom machine, or even one from a major manufacturer, do a little research to be sure that the company has a good reputation for customer support. There' s noth-

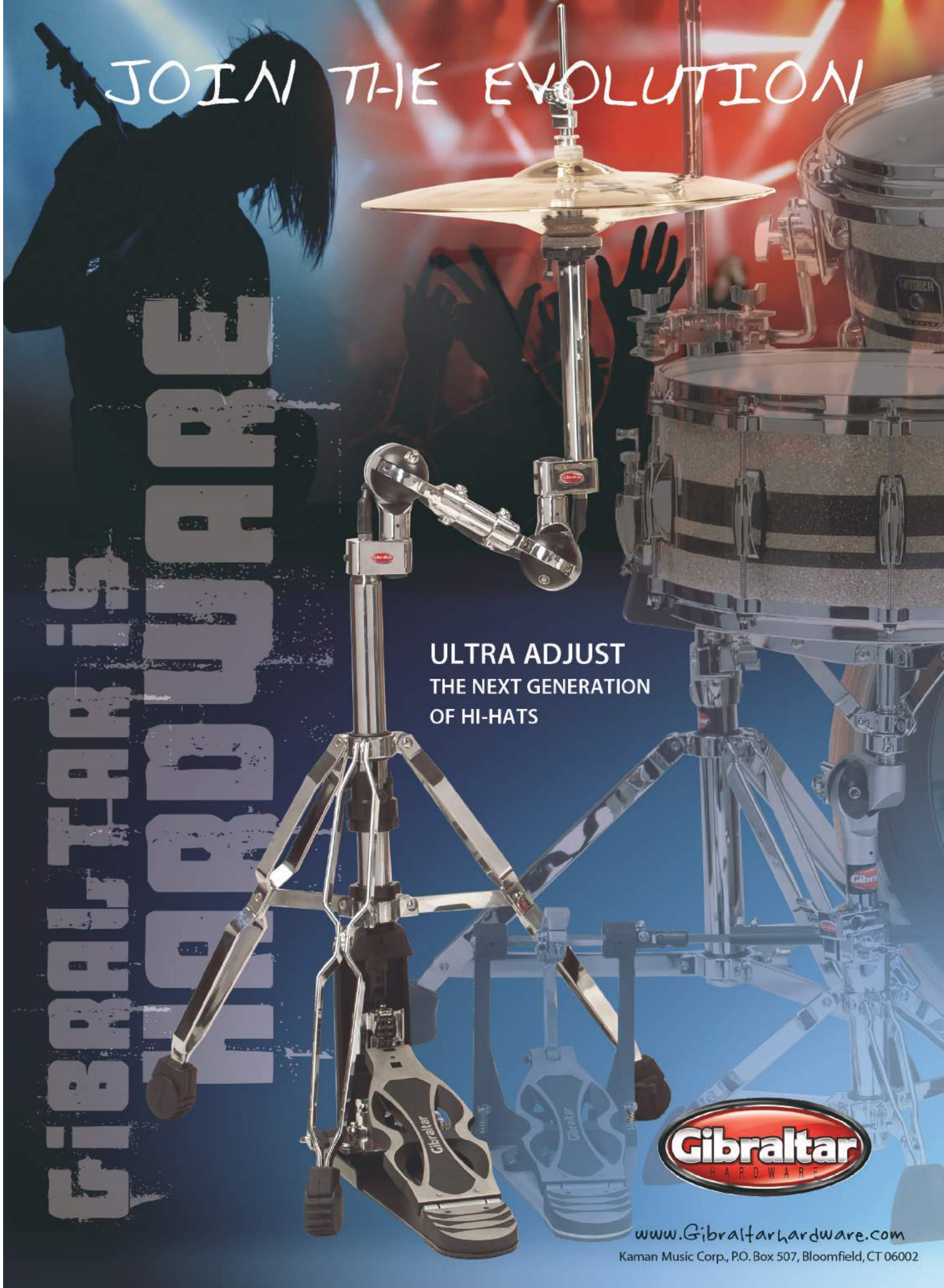


The MusicXPC M4, Macbook Pro, and HP Pavillion dv9000t are all great computers for a mobile studio.

GET THE SPECS

Here are some important details you should look for when shopping for a laptop to ensure the best performance.

1) 2.0 GHz (or higher) processor speed
2) 7,200 RPM hard drive with 100 GB or more of storage space
3) At least 1 GB of RAM (2–3 gigs is preferred)
4) At least two USB 2.0 ports (for peripheral devices and dongles)
5) A FireWire 400 port for your audio interface, and a FireWire 800 port if you want to record to an external hard drive (recommended).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ing worse than having your system crash an hour before a session and not being able to get any help.

You should also consult a PC audio professional regarding ways to optimize your system for best performance. There are a lot of tweaks that can be made, like shutting off certain CPU-intensive services, that' ll minimize problems as you' re working with your music.

In addition to having a variety of brand choices, you also have a good chance of finding a powerful PC laptop at a decent price. For instance, a brand new HP Pavilion dv9000t, with appropriate upgrades (including an internal dual hard drive that allows you to record and store your work directly on your system), costs about $1,800. But there' s no music production software included. So you' ll have to spend a couple hundred extra bucks on a third-party audio program before digging in.

To Pro Tools, Or Not To Pro Tools?

Once you' ve decided on a laptop, the next thing you have to determine is what you want to be able to do with your system and which software is best suited for those applications. There are several great digital audio workstations (DAWs) out there that can do everything from multi-track recording to advanced MIDI sequencing. But for high-powered recording and editing, Pro Tools is the standard. Also, if you plan to do a lot of session work with your mobile studio, it' s likely that the artists you' re working with will have recorded their material in Pro Tools. If you have the same program on your system, you can simply load their session file onto your computer and start tracking.

One hang-up with Pro Tools is that you need to have one of Digidesign' s specified audio interfaces connected to your laptop in order to open your sessions. There are basically two versions of Pro Tools for home studio owners, LE and M-Powered. Both versions can share session files. But each has its own specific group of audio interfaces that you' ll need to use in order to open the

ADD TO YOUR ARSENAL

Once you've put together a basic laptop studio, you might want to consider adding some of the following items to your system.

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1) An external 7,200 RPM FireWire 800 hard drive for recording and storage, so you can keep your laptop's system disc from getting bogged down with huge session files.
2) A drummer-specific USB MIDI controller, like M-Audio's Trigger Finger or Alesis's Control Pad, so you can program rhythm tracks in real-time.
3) A USB MIDI interface, like the MIDISport 4x4, so you can control multiple MIDI devices at once (keyboards, electronic drums, etc.).
4) A pair of high-quality headphones (like AKG's 271 Studio) or in-ear monitors (like Shure's E or M-Audio's IE series), so you can work on projects in any environment.

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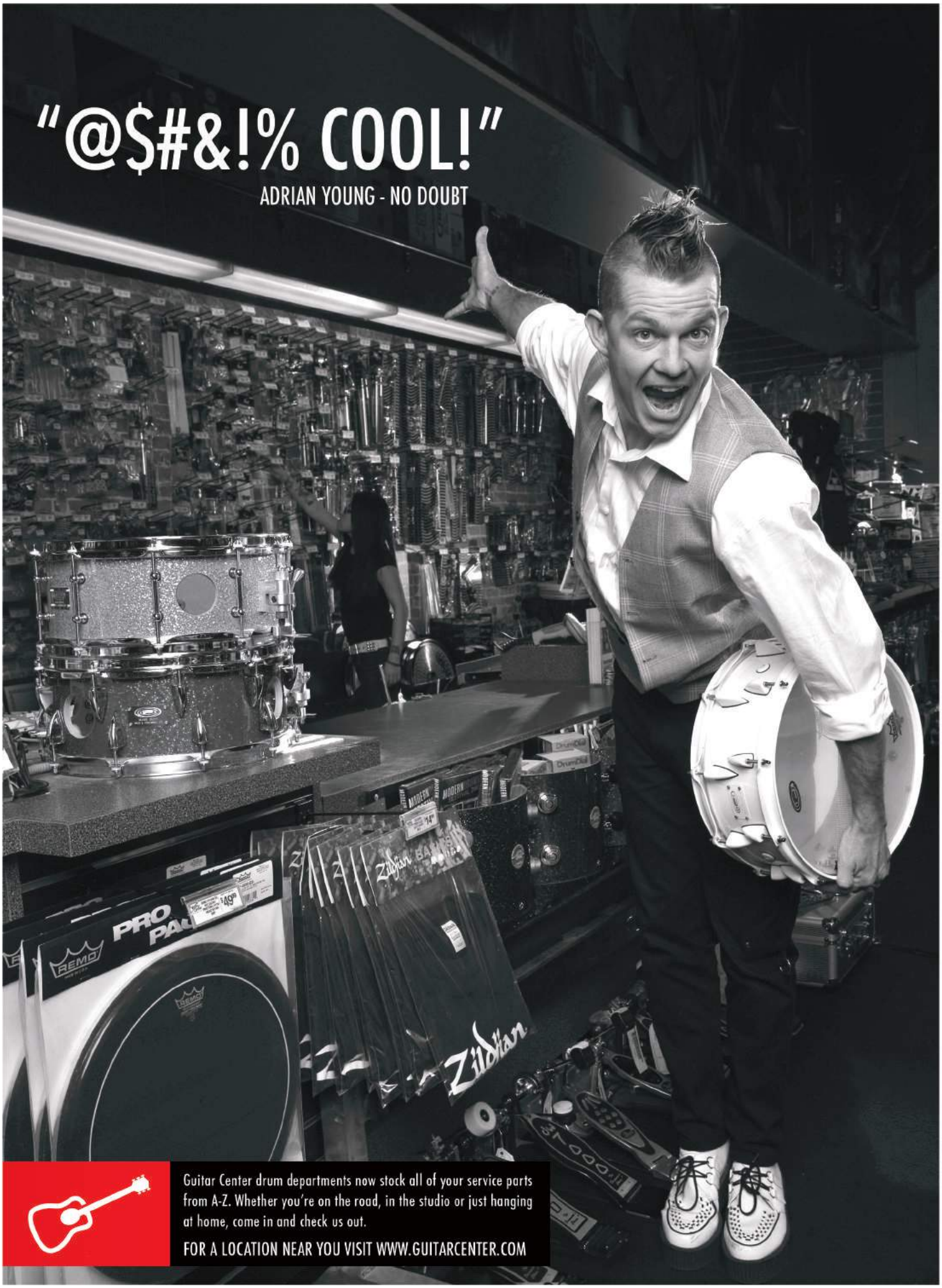
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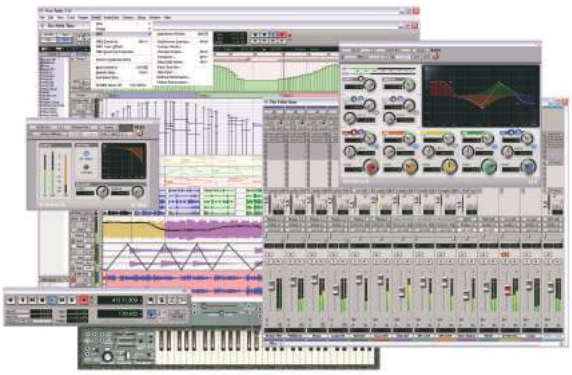
program. This means that an interface for Pro Tools M-Powered won't be able to run LE, and vice versa. (More on interfaces later.) Also, many of the program's effects require an iLok key, which is a small USB device (called a "dongle") that contains all of the plug-in's serial numbers.

Putting those slight deterrents aside, Pro Tools is very powerful and relatively easy to learn. But it isn't your only choice. If you go with a Mac, you can do a lot of the same things with GarageBand, including editing, looping, and mixing multi-track drum recordings. Both GarageBand and its big brother, Logic Pro, are owned by Apple, so they'll work seamlessly on your system. Another highly regarded Mac-based program is MOTU's Digital Performer.

Other multi-purpose DAWs include Steinberg's Cubase, Cakewalk's Sonar (PC only), and Ableton Live. Each of these has comparable features to Pro Tools, as well as some unique functions of their own.

Of those three, Ableton Live is especially noteworthy. It's designed to serve double-duty as a high-powered multi-track recorder and as an intuitive real-time "performance" instrument that allows you to record and improvise arrangements of loops and sequences on the fly. It also has a "Tap" function that helps you keep your backing tracks in sync with your live performance by playing a MIDI controller or by pressing one of the laptop's keys along with the tempo of the song. For these reasons, Live is an ideal program for those of us who want to use their laptops in the studio and on the gig.

Continued on page 145



Pro Tools (top) and Ableton Live (middle) are two of the most powerful and versatile DAWs on the market. But Apple's GarageBand (bottom) is no slouch either.

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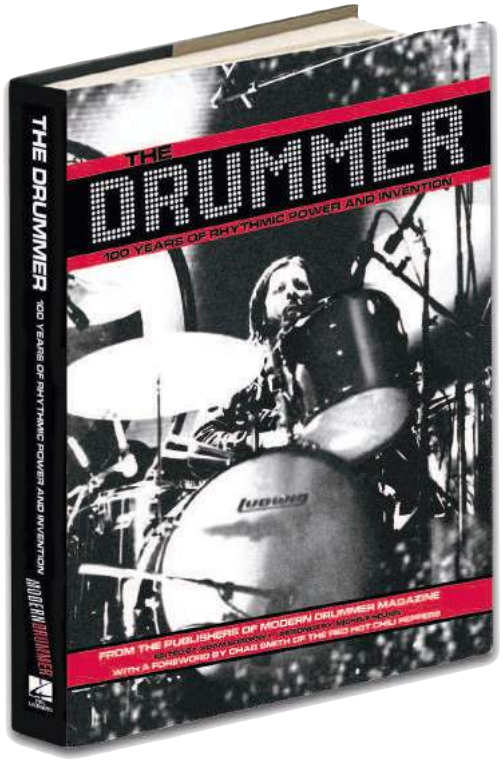

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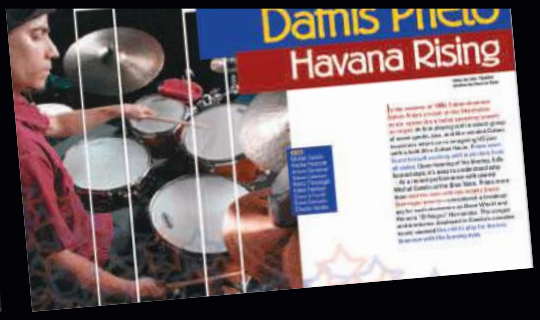

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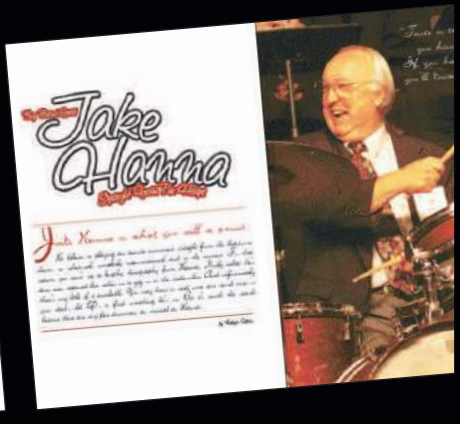

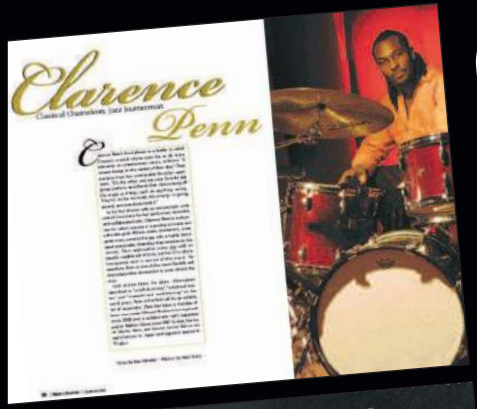

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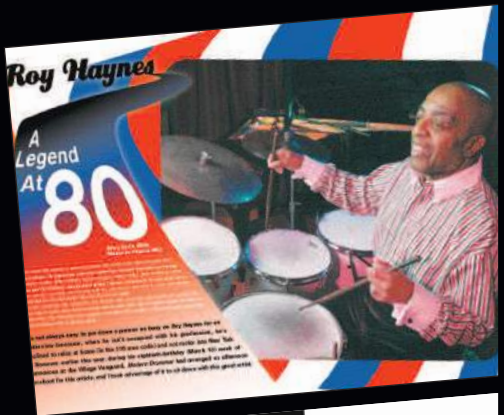
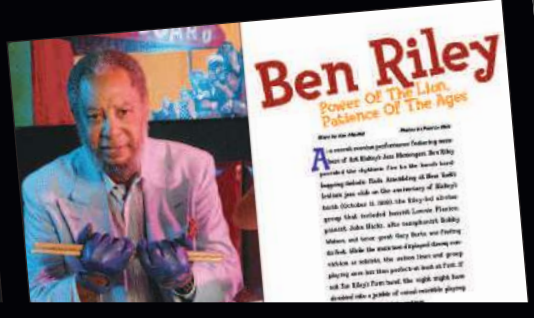
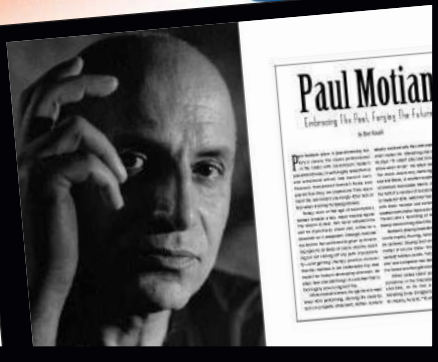






Digi 003 Rack

M-Audio 1814

Presonus FireStudio

Finding Your Face

Basically stated, an audio interface is a piece of gear that converts analog signals (from microphones, electronic instruments, etc.) into digital information within your computer' s audio software. It' s also what turns the digital info from your computer into what you hear in your monitors or headphones. While most laptops come with a simple built-in interface (usually as $^1/_8$" inputs and outputs), their analog-to-digital and digital-to-analog converters are not adequate for professional audio applications. And they don' t allow you to do multi-track recordings. So a high-quality FireWire audio interface is essential to a professional-grade laptop studio.

If you' ve decided to go with Pro Tools, then you only have a few interface options that will suit your mobile drumming needs. For Pro Tools LE, you can get their Digi 003 Rack, which allows you to record up to eight tracks at once (four balanced XLR mics and four unbalance $^1/_4$" inputs). Or, if you choose Pro Tools' M-Powered software, you can use one of several interfaces from M-Audio, like the FireWire 1814. This interface has two balanced mic inputs and eight line inputs.

Obviously, neither the 003 nor the 1814 provide enough balanced mic channels to allow you to record a complete drumkit. (Most multi-track drum sessions use at least six mics.) So you' ll also have to pick up a digital mic preamp, like M-Audio' s Octane, in order to get all the tracks you need. The Octane gives you eight additional inputs, and links up with your interface via ADAT optical cable (known as " light pipe").

If you choose a DAW other than Pro Tools, you have more variety for audio interfaces, like PreSonus' s FireStudio. The FireStudio allows you to record up to eight tracks of balanced XLR signals at once. If you need additional inputs, you can link up to two of PreSonus' s DigiMax FS preamps (via light pipe) to get a total of twenty-four channels. PreSonus also throws in their software bundle ProPak, which includes a copy of Cubase LE and several virtual instruments and effects plug-ins, with each FireStudio interface.

Aim High

As you' re considering which computer, software, and interface is best for you, keep in mind where you might want to go in the future. Even though a particular piece of gear may be good enough for now, as you gain more experience incorporating your laptop into your music, you' ll likely want to expand your setup down the road. So even if you have to save up a little extra cash, it' ll be worth it in the long run to have as powerful a system as you can afford. That way, the only limitation is your imagination.

The New Generation

A Modern Philosophy On Drumset Teaching

by Jeremy Hummel

As a drum instructor, I've seen my role and purpose expand greatly over the past few years. In its simplest form, teaching others was a way to share my knowledge of the instrument, and, hopefully, earn a living in the process.

However, I've come to realize that educating means so much more than just explaining notes on a page or sharing a few concepts I picked up from my own experience. While every generation surely feels the same about the ones that follow, I must say that kids today are different.

In this article, I'll outline some of these differences. I'll also offer a few ideas that I've incorporated to better serve my students—who may be, after all, artists of the future.

Getting Started

I get a large number of students, and most of them come to me because they want to play drums—meaning not just the snare drum, but the whole drumset. I've heard too many stories of young drummers not enjoying lessons—or giving up their studies altogether—because they were at the mercy of when the teacher felt they were "ready to move on."

If a student comes to me and already owns a drumset, we are going to do drumset playing, regardless of that student's experience. And while my instruction includes rudiments and fundamentals, I don't feel that it does a student any good to have his drumset staring him in the face in his bedroom as he repeatedly plays "LRLL." I think it's safe to say that nearly every beginner who's relegated to the snare drum quickly wonders, "Why do I have to do this?"

A Method To The Madness

When teaching fundamentals, I believe it's important to show how certain rudiments can be used on the drumset. For example, a paradiddle can be applied to create many cool patterns. I demonstrate this by placing the "L" on one drum, the "R" on another, and doing a variety of things with the bass drum. Or how about showing how a double-stroke roll can be worked into a cool-sounding fill?

How much more motivation would a student have if what we're teaching sounds like something musical? If we can show students how these sticking patterns will benefit them, they'll be more likely to be willing to go through some of those "not so fun" beginning exercises.

Some teachers take the position that putting beginners on a strict diet of rudiments helps to weed out the "wanna-bes." My philosophy is that I'd rather reel in drummers than turn them away. The comparison I like to use is when Mr. Miyagi was working with Daniel in the movie *The Karate Kid*. Remember how Ralph Macchio's character wanted to learn karate so badly, but all he was instructed to do was "paint the fence" or "sand the floor"? Granted, he did use all of these techniques eventually. But he had to wait a long time to see how to incorporate them into his ultimate goal. My point is: Why make someone wait?

I basically strike a deal with my students. We agree to do equal parts technique/hand exercises and drumset—as long as they hold up their end of the bargain. If the hand exercises begin to drop off, we spend less time on the drumset.

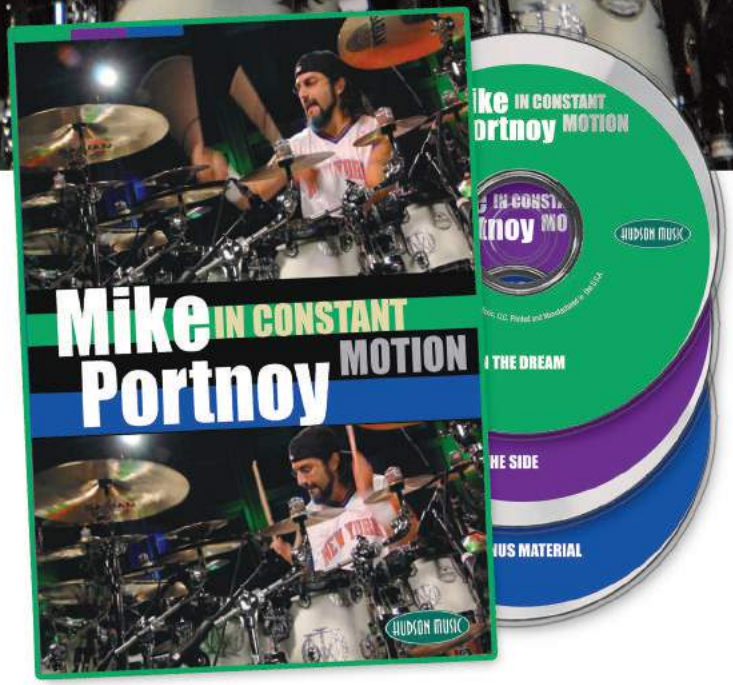
Who Inspires Them?

We live in an age where Internet downloads and piracy have made record sales plummet, and when most bands' careers are so fleeting that before we have time to realize who they are, they're gone. I've recently noticed how many kids I teach don't even *have* favorite bands. When a lot of us were coming up, we could have rattled off our ten favorite bands with no problem. My only dilemma was always who was going to be left off the list. These days it's more about favorite *songs*.

We need to create awareness in our students, by passing along great music of the past and present. Sharing knowledge can go beyond drumming. Explain why The Beatles were great, point out

Students are responsible for maintaining—and following—their practice calendars.

Triple Play.



In Constant Motion features over seven hours of instruction as well as live and studio performances of virtually all the music Mike's been involved with since his award-winning "Liquid Drum Theater" video. Packed with state-of-the-art audio and video, special features and printable transcriptions of selected performances, the depth and diversity of this package is unprecedented and recommended for drummers of all interest and ability levels.

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the thunder that is Led Zeppelin, communicate the brilliance of Miles Davis...the list goes on.

While the Internet has killed off a lot of record buying, cyberspace can be used to some benefit. I like to direct people to iTunes, where they can hear samples of different styles of music—and, potentially, purchase the song. That way, if they try something new and don't care for it, it's only a dollar lost. The nice part about iTunes is that the artists receive compensation for their work, as opposed to people getting something for nothing.

Positive Reinforcement

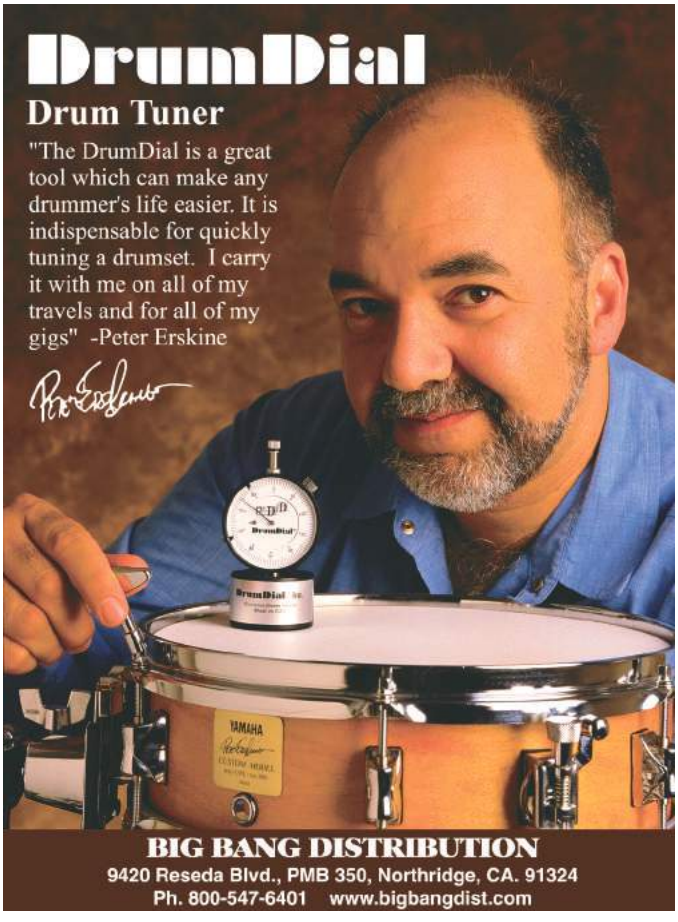
Early last year, I happened to be in one of those phases with my students. You know, the weather was getting nicer, the days were getting longer, and the extra-curricular activities began heating up. Not surprisingly, the kids were coming in less prepared. I knew that when summer officially arrived, it would only get worse. Kids would begin calling on the day of a lesson to say that "something came up," when they really just wanted to swim at Johnny's a little longer. I tended to be fairly lenient about this. However, my leniency at times paved the way for mediocrity.

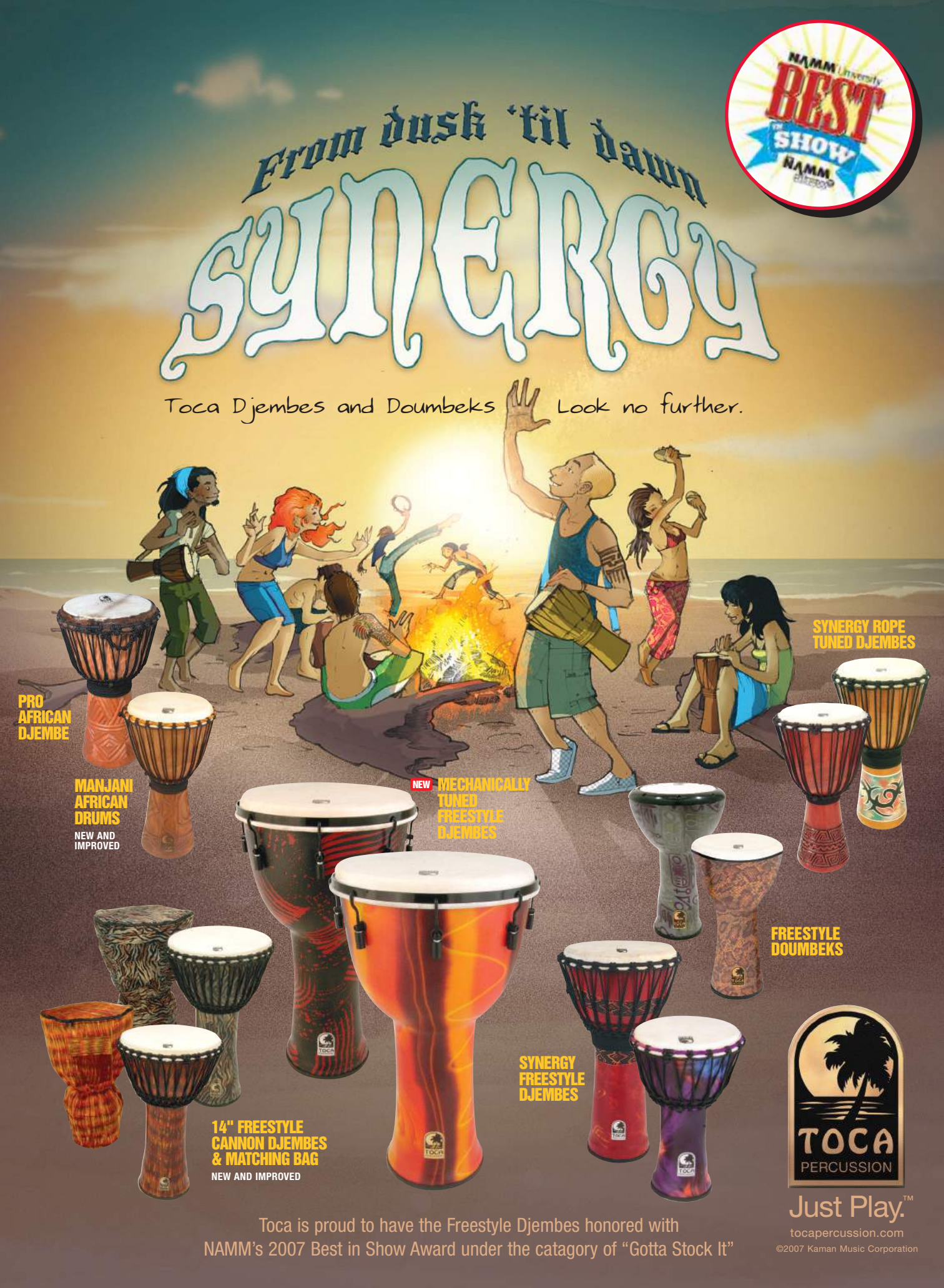
Eventually I realized that if I was ever going to find a way to tighten up the ship, the time was now. The challenging part was finding a way to install a mandatory practice schedule without having it feel like a chore or a punishment. So I came up with a Student Of The Month rewards program for my students eighteen and under. (Adults pay for their own lessons, so they generally practice enough to get their money's worth.)

Some teachers put beginners on a strict diet of rudiments to weed out the "wanna-bes." I'd rather reel in drummers than turn them away.

Here's how it works: A student is required to practice a minimum of three half-hour sessions per week. I hand out monthly calendars (like the one shown on the previous page) on which the time is documented. Before a student comes to his or her lesson, a parent or guardian must sign or initial the times that the student has filled in—essentially vouching for them. For every week that a student shows up prepared and has his or her time vouched for by a parent, a star goes on my board. If, at the end of the month, that student has achieved a star for each week, he or she is eligible to be chosen as Student Of The Month.

The student who ultimately is designated wins a T-shirt that says "Drum Student Of The Month" on the front and has my Web site address on the back. (A little marketing never hurts.) The kid will wear it around with pride, and other kids will say, "I want to be Student Of The Month, too." The winner also gets his or her picture taken and displayed in my studio, with "Student Of The Month" on it for all to see. And (this is my favorite part) the winner gets a $20 gift certificate for the local record store, to be used on a CD of his/her

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Student progress is recorded on a Star Board.

choice. The certificate *cannot* be used on a video game, since the idea is to promote music. Many times a student doesn't want to spend his or her entire allowance on a CD that may have only one or two good songs. Here is the opportunity to check out a new band, or maybe a different genre of music.

Since I started this program, nearly 100% of my students have received a star all four weeks. Therefore, the final Student Of The Month winner is ultimately decided by me. That may not necessarily be the best drummer. It could be the person who showed the most improvement, or who tackled some really difficult things that particular month.

The SOTM program works great for several reasons. In many cases it's not that kids don't want to practice, it's that they need structure. I explain what a possible schedule could be. For example, if a student is only going to practice the minimum time, perhaps fifteen minutes of hand exercises and the other fifteen on a new beat would be sufficient.

The program also promotes accountability. The student is not only responsible for documenting the practice time, but also for maintaining the practice calendar. I advise them to keep the paper stapled in their drum notebook, because if they show up without the paper, they won't receive their star.

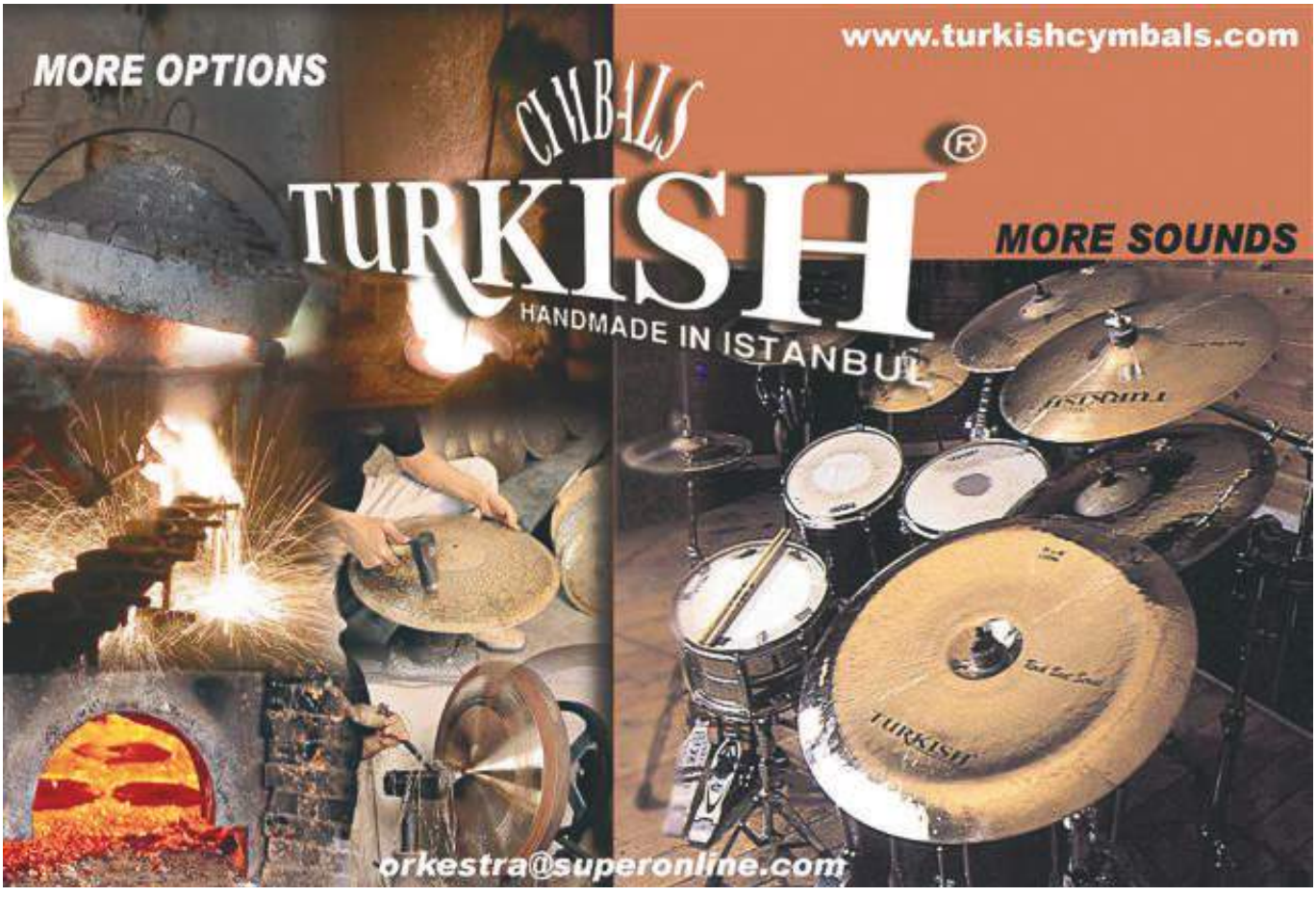
Parents love the SOTM program, too. They can readily see that their money is being well spent. And many of them have commented on the results they've heard.

It All Comes Down To...

I've been around some teachers who are far more concerned about their "regimen" than about how much they're helping each individual student to progress. But every student has a different personality and a different learning curve. So the first question I ask someone when they walk through the door is, "What do you want to get better at?"

Some people want to get better at double bass, others need a hand in things like timekeeping, creating new fills, or learning new styles of music. Teaching is not meant to be self-serving. It should be about "How can I help you?" My motto for teaching is simple: "Teach the way you would like to be taught."

Jeremy Hummel was an original member of Breaking Benjamin. He helped that group achieve platinum status with their second release, *We Are Not Alone*. He has since turned his efforts to session work and drum instruction in Pennsylvania. Jeremy can be reached at his Web site, www.jeremyhummel.com.



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LA Music Academy

A Decade Of Dedication

Story by Robyn Flans • Photos by Alex Solca

In 1996, a group of prominent musicians founded the LA Music Academy (LAMA). At this vocational-style school located in Pasadena, California, students live, eat, and breathe music over an intense year-long program. But what makes LAMA really special is its faculty of professional, working musicians.

A jazz ensemble performs under the watchful eye of Tony Inzalaco.

Ralph Humphrey and Joe Porcaro, who had earlier spearheaded the drum department at Musician's Institute, were invited to help create the new school. "At the beginning, LAMA was small and very personal," says Humphrey, who's played for Frank Zappa, Barbra Streisand, Wayne Shorter, and Diane Schuur, and is the house drummer for Dancing With The Stars. "The courses and ensembles were a little different from MI's approach. At MI, students play with students. At LAMA, students play with pros. Today, even with increased enrollment, we're still able to keep things on a personal level."

Studying With The Pros

Humphrey's technique course takes students through forty weeks of an intense drumset curriculum that doesn't exist anywhere else. "You won't find it in a book or on a DVD," says Ralph. "It's unique to LAMA. I'm very proud of this course, which seems to be the hub of the whole drum program. Around that hub are the styles classes, including rock, funk, Latin, and jazz."

Studio great Joe Porcaro heads the jazz course, sharing instructional duties with colleague Tony Inzalaco. Because most students today don't have a strong background in jazz, the curriculum starts from the beginning, going from ride cymbal patterns all the way to comping and soloing.

Joe also stresses the emphasis LAMA puts on reading. "We audition the students to evaluate their reading level, and we

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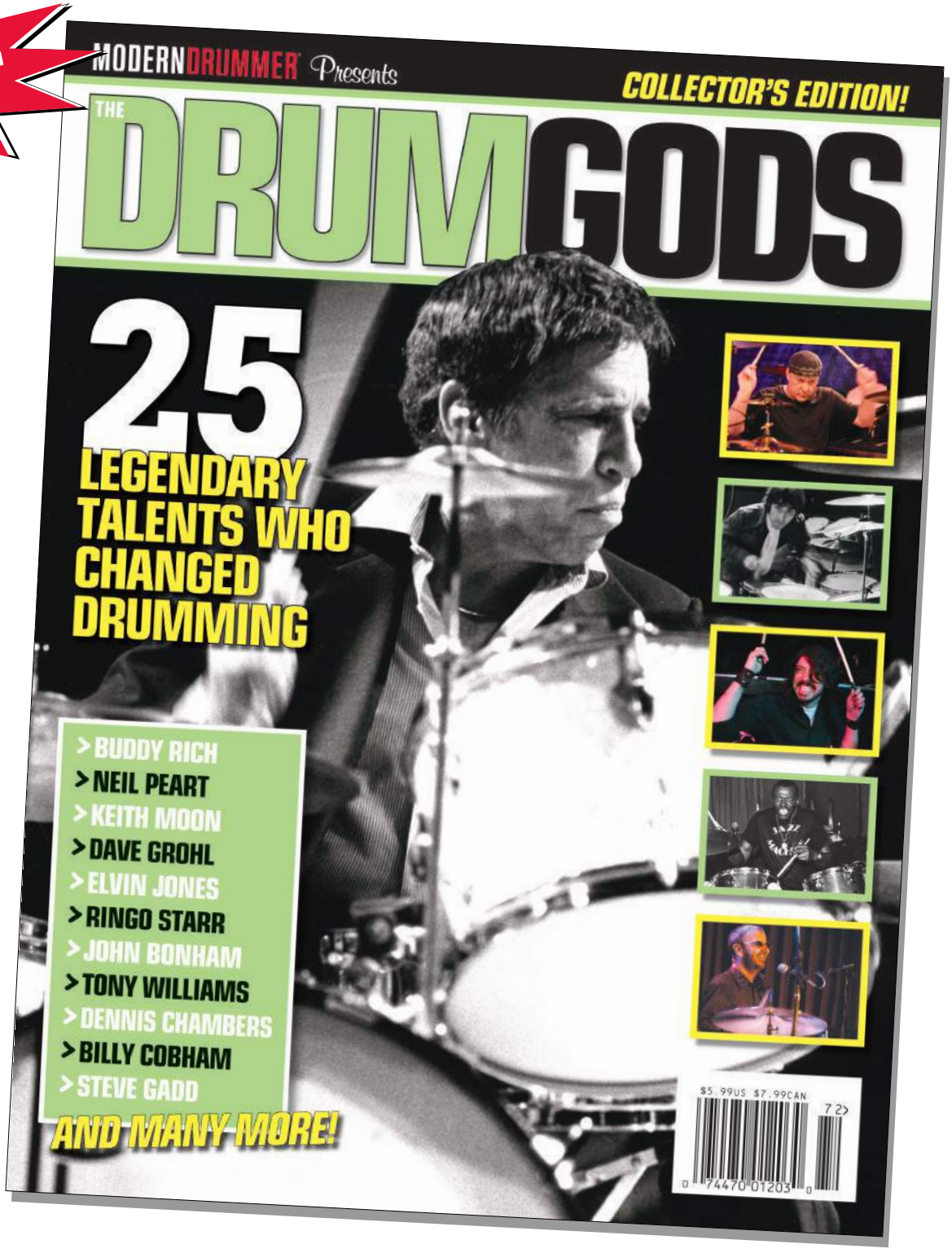

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make sure they can read before they leave," says Joe. "We put them through a rigorous sight-reading course from day one. I'll bring in parts I did in the studios, so they can get an idea of what a typical part is. We'll also give them rock drumset examples to sight-read."

Mike Shapiro, who's in charge of funk, R&B, and Latin courses, says that LAMA's two-pronged program is tailored to provide a real vocational view of being a musician. "We give students a great foundation in technique," he explains, "so they can play on their instruments what they hear in their heads. We also stress that music is an art form. We offer an opportunity for musicians to find themselves. We have a very encouraging environment, and I think that breeds success."

Left: Ralph Humphrey feels that LAMA's course work is geared toward the serious student. Below: Joe Porcaro conducts a jazz class.

Shapiro is also LAMA's dean of students, and he makes himself available for counseling. "Because our environment is small," he says, "we're able to offer individual attention to each student. It's not a cookie-cutter approach."

Dave Beyer joined the LAMA faculty part-time when he came off the road with Melissa Etheridge in 1997. In 2000 he signed on full-time, at which point he rewrote the rock curriculum. Beyer's approach is to start with the history of drumming. "You don't have to be a historian to be a great drummer," says Dave. "But it's important to understand how rock drumming came together."

Beyer employs a combination of lectures and practical demonstrations, talking about historical tunes and inviting pro bass and guitar players to play the songs with the students. He also can tap into the LAMA faculty to make his points. "The talent and experience of the teachers at this school is incredible," Dave enthuses. "When I start talking about the drummers of Frank Zappa, Ralph Humphrey is in the next classroom. Students can ask him questions about his work with Zappa, and his input is invaluable. Joe Porcaro is a gold mine of stories from back in the 1960s and '70s, when TV shows like Sonny & Cher came about. Mike Shapiro has been working with Sergio Mendes and with will.i.am of Black Eyed Peas. Of course, students all want to tour with someone, so I can fill them in on what that's like."

Beyer, whose own background includes

work with The Motels, Michael McDonald, America, and Christopher Cross, gives students tools with which to develop their own styles. Says Dave, " I cite examples like Stewart Copeland, who took a little bit of punk, a little bit of ska, and a little bit of reggae, and created his own style. I believe there' s still plenty of blank canvas for students to express themselves on."

Total Immersion

The LAMA program is all about saturation. Each day of the week focuses on a different style of music. For instance, third-quarter students will have an Afro-Cuban Drums lecture on Friday mornings, followed by an Afro-Cuban Ensemble Workshop in the afternoon. There they' ll be accompanied by a professional bassist and a guitarist or keyboardist, who, along with the teacher, will help them focus on achieving the proper feel and technique in a song that exemplifies this style. The Afro-Cuban class rotates every other week with one on Brazilian drums.

These ensemble workshops—limited to between ten and fifteen students—are the cornerstone of the LAMA program. Drum students also take a variety of classes including sight reading, playing techniques, ensemble reading techniques, ear training & dictation, harmony & theory, basic piano, and a private lesson.

Students may also choose from many elective courses, such as contemporary music history & listening, arranging & orchestration, styles & analysis of musical composition in Western music, the business of making music, studio recording workshop, and other performance ensembles.

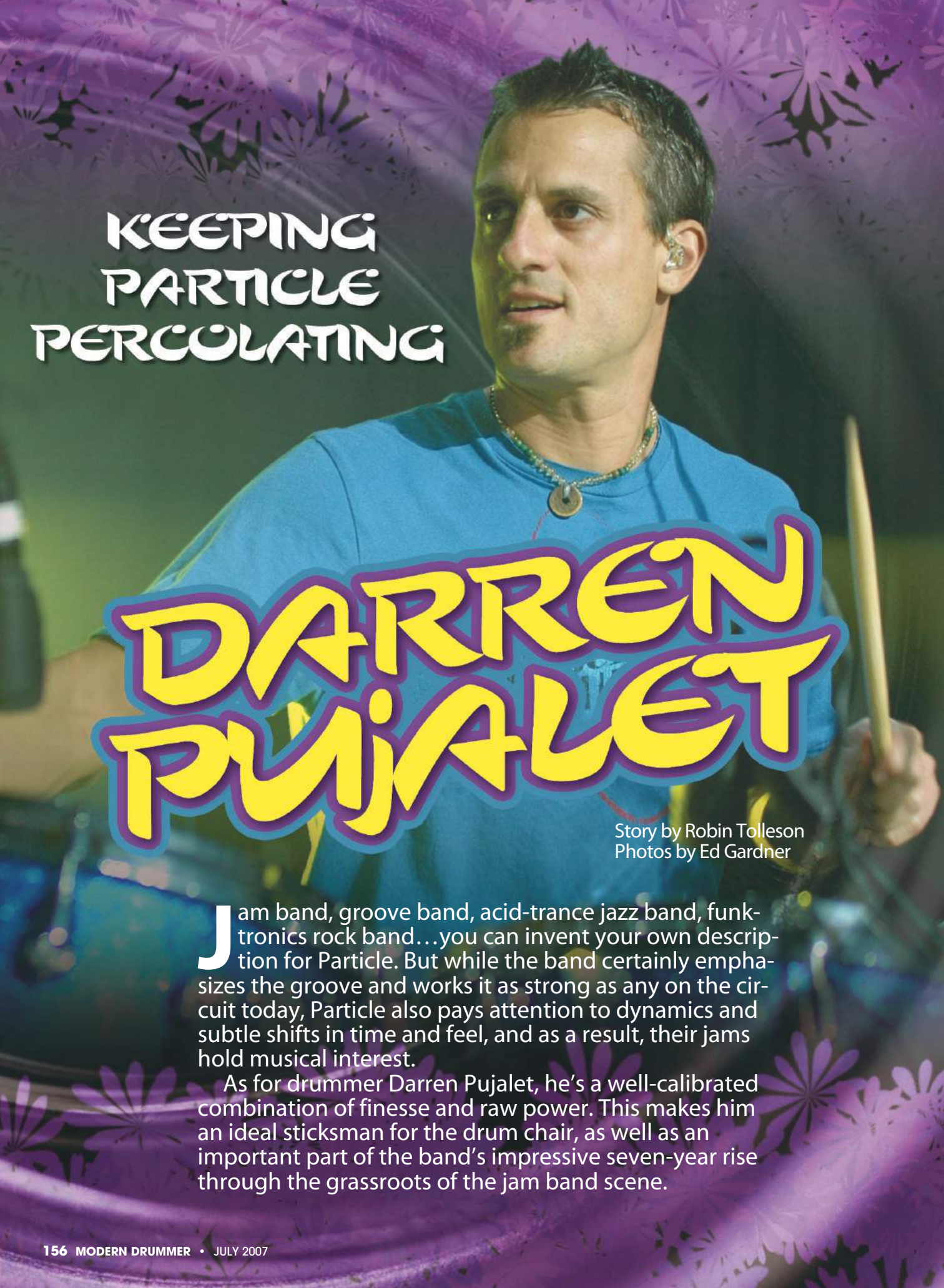
The school is open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Students spend an average of two to five hours a day practicing their craft. Then they usually head out to soak up the great music around LA at night, or hold impromptu jams with other students.

" I like the fact that LAMA students are not idle for very long," says Ralph Humphrey. " They' re doing something throughout the course of every day. The year blazes by for all of us, and most of the students are asking for more. We' re beginning to consider extending the program. It' s very gratifying to know that in this constantly changing world, LAMA has generated a lot of interest, and the customers are very satisfied."

Students may enter the LAMA program at any quarter through the year. Tuition is $4,125 per quarter (with additional book and activities fees). Housing must be obtained separately. For more information, go to www.lamusicacademy.com.

SUMMER SCHOOL, TOO

LAMA also offers summer programs to whet the appetite of potential students while letting them experience the school in a concentrated fashion. Last summer, the ensemble project was to write a composition that would be taken into the studio to record. Says Ralph Humphrey, "We put a high priority on creativity. Very often, schools become very academic, so we stress the creative aspect, and the kids see their own growth."



KEEPING PARTICLE PERCOLATING

DARREN PUJALET

Story by Robin Tolleson
Photos by Ed Gardner

Jam band, groove band, acid-trance jazz band, funktronics rock band…you can invent your own description for Particle. But while the band certainly emphasizes the groove and works it as strong as any on the circuit today, Particle also pays attention to dynamics and subtle shifts in time and feel, and as a result, their jams hold musical interest.

As for drummer Darren Pujalet, he's a well-calibrated combination of finesse and raw power. This makes him an ideal sticksman for the drum chair, as well as an important part of the band's impressive seven-year rise through the grassroots of the jam band scene.

From The Bottom Up

Many of Particle' s songs are built around drumkit and bass grooves that Pujalet brings in. In 2006, the band celebrated the arrival of two new bandmembers with a groove-laden DVD/CD, Transformations Live: For The People. " And on our CD Launchpad, I bet seventy-five percent of the songs were started with bass and drums," Pujalet points out. " That' s how we create much of our music.

" A lot of times we write together as a band," Pujalet continues, " and sometimes people bring in songs. Often I'll have a drum groove and a bass riff in mind, which I' ll explain to Eric [Gould, bassist]. Then different members of the band will jam on that idea and it will evolve. We all have laptops on the road—I use Reason software—and I recently wrote a song playing the keyboards and programming the bass, drum, and guitar parts. It' s so amazing having Reason and Pro Tools; you can really take things from your brain and put them to work on a computer right away."

Modus Operandi

Particle spends time devising special shows for their audiences, which means they' re constantly working to keep fresh material coming. " We try to get about an hour of stage time before every gig to rehearse songs, try new covers, write new material, and create tricks that we' ll do that night," the drummer shares. " Since a good portion of our music is instrumental, we really feel we have to turn enough corners to keep people interested and satisfied."

Particle' s career was launched on a sold-out dance cruise on San Francisco Bay in 2000. The band has continued to seek out and orchestrate other unusual and unique dance events ever since. " I' m very business-minded, and the band is very business-savvy," Pujalet confides. " We feel like we' re out in the field with our fingers on the pulse. So we get these conceptual ideas while we' re on the road and discuss them with management and other people. We' ve done shows where we play all Pink Floyd music, and we' ve performed with Gospel choirs and string sections. We also try to play odd places from time to time, like bowling alleys and costume parties. We did a Halloween party where we played all TV-show themes."

Particle titled their new CD For The People in honor of their fans. " I really love to watch people dance," Pujalet says. " You have to have enough patience to let the audience get

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B. 6 1/2x14 wood-hoop snare (Allegra Drum Company)
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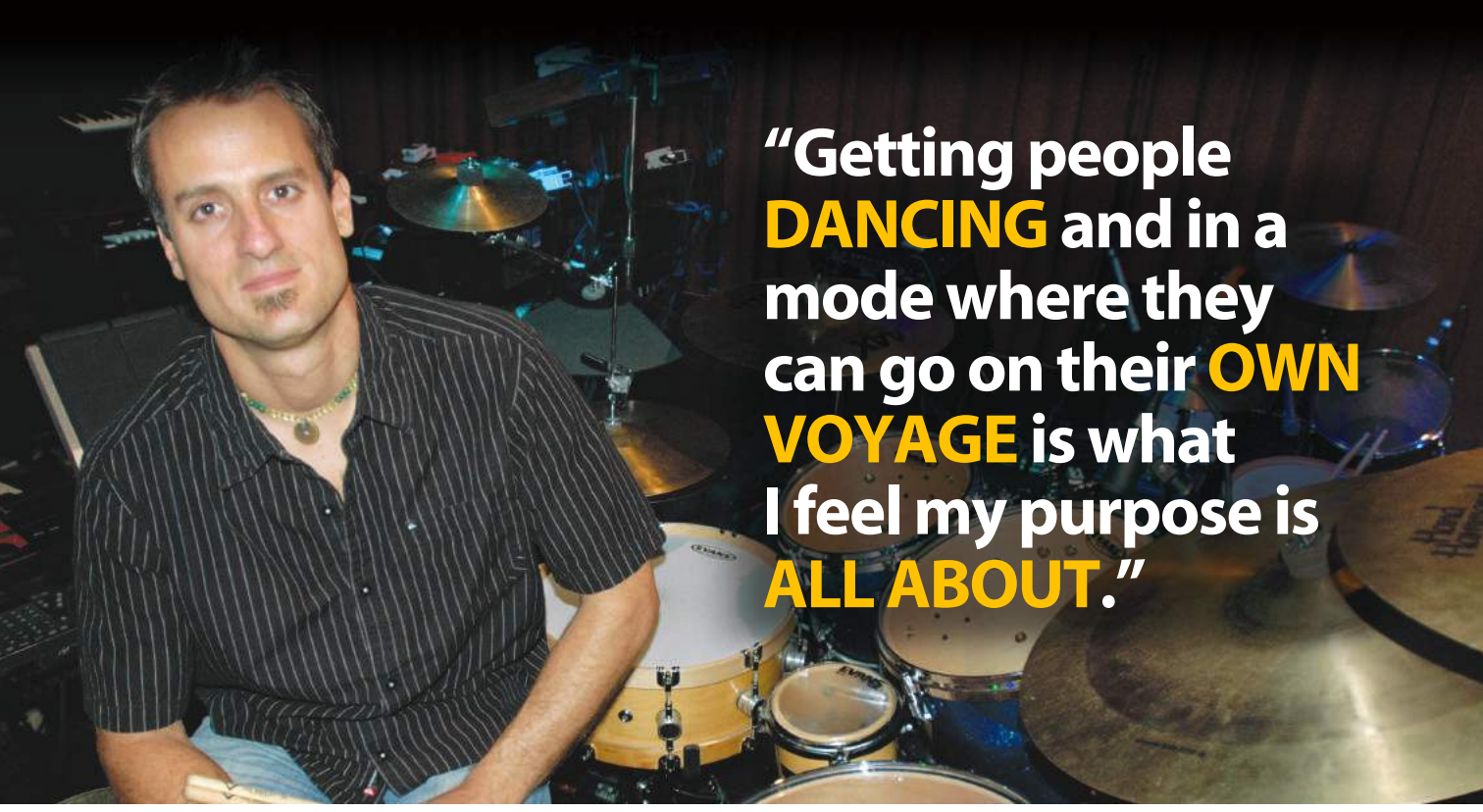
Sticks: Vater 5A Los Angeles model (hickory with wood tip)
Microphones: Yamaha Subkick



into a groove and not turn a corner on them. Our fans really love to dance, and I appreciate letting them get into a sort of meditative state. A big thing for me is to take people away from their day jobs, their bills, their everyday responsibilities. If we do that, I feel like we' ve done our job. Also, getting people dancing and in a mode where they can go on their own voyage is what I feel my purpose onstage is all about.

" The style of music we play, ' funktronic rock,' involves a lot of tension & release, a lot of adding and subtracting layers, and dynamic shifts," the drummer adds. " So within that, a lot of times the pulse continues. People are getting a variety of musical experiences at our shows, but a lot of times a steady pulse drives through all of it."

Pujalet creates interesting textures during some of the breaks, using mallets on cymbals or rolling on toms. On " E-Pro," they build to a crescendo at the thirteen-minute mark and then break it down. Pujalet goes to kick only, building up slowly with some hi-hat splashes and cross-stick. On " Ed & Molly," the band starts with several minutes of ambient sound before Pujalet starts a groove on a high tom. Then the build is on. It' s another three minutes before he strikes a cymbal.

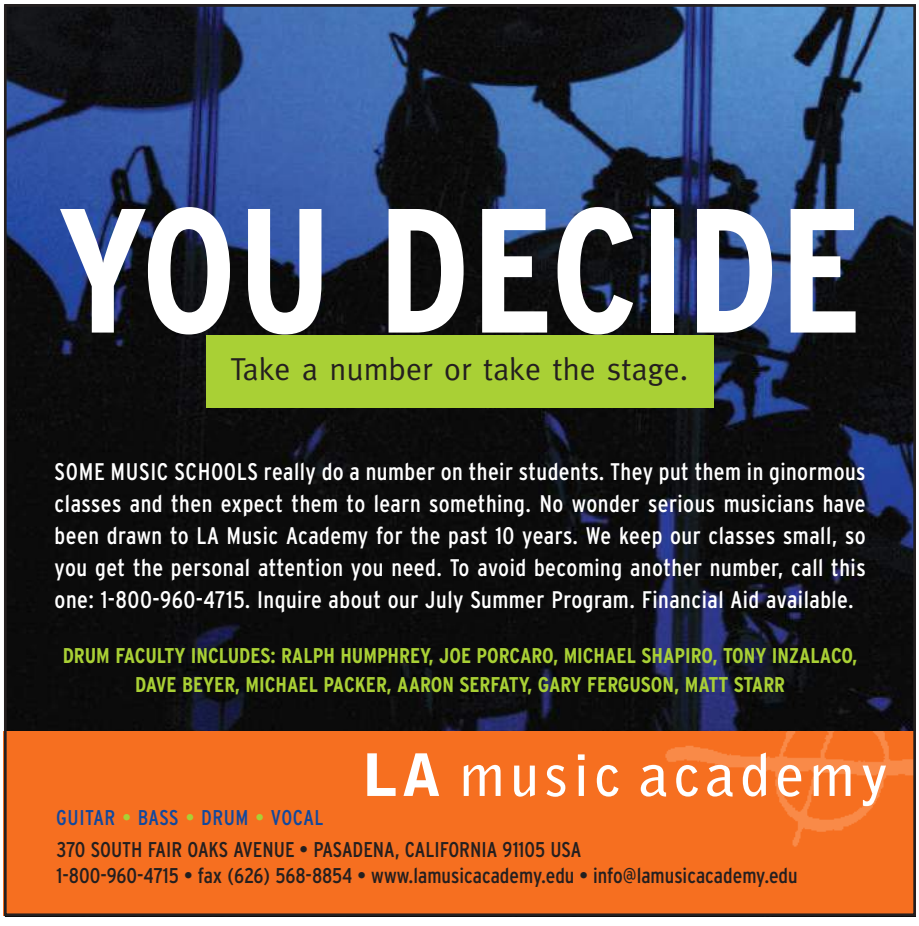
" Were a very color-oriented band," he insists. " And when you see us live, you' ll see in the light show how important it is to us to have the visual aspect as well as the audio covered."

On the chorus to " Particle People," Pujalet straightens the beat out into a heavy and steady rock groove, then brings it down with a smooth touch. " We try to take a more electronic sound and bring an organic sense to it," he explains. " We try to give it a more tangible feel. There' s a live emotion with what we do, as well as a lot of improvisation. We really need that improvisation, too. It' s hard to just play parts all night. And we respect the opportunity to be able to take the music wherever we' re feeling it in our hearts."

Beginnings

Pujalet was born in the San Francisco Bay Area and grew up in Fresno, in California' s central valley. He first took up guitar, and played in an acoustic ensemble. " I really love

Continued on page 161



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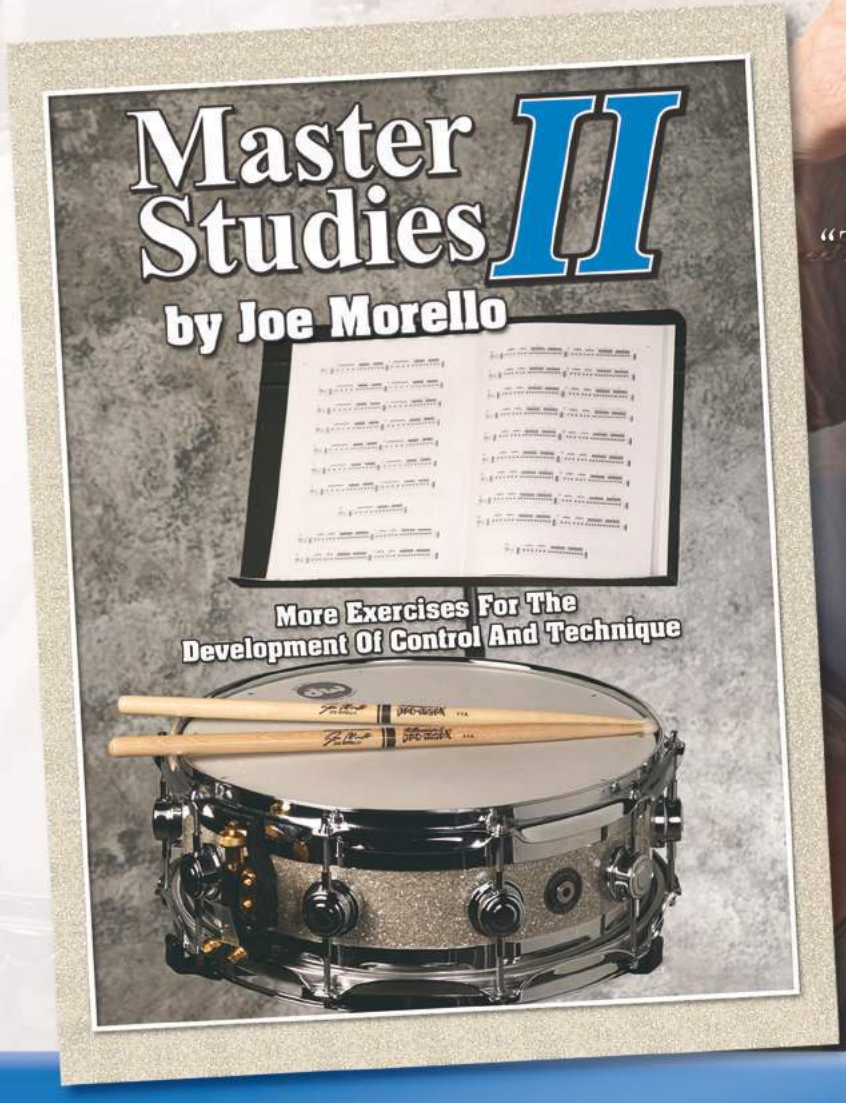

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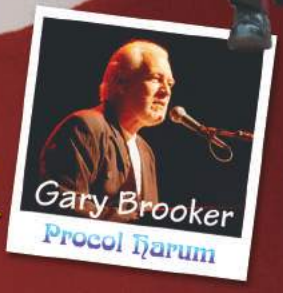

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the guitar," he admits, "but as I grew older I needed the power of the drums. I really appreciated that. So I would sneak over to friends' houses and play their drums on Friday nights when their parents were out. Probably one of my fondest memories as a kid is stealing all my mom's Tupperware and lining it up against the wall to play it with spoons.

"When I was fourteen I bought my first drumset when my parents left town for the weekend," Darren says, laughing. "It was a Ludwig Vistalite kit, which I wish I still owned. Shortly after that I built my own stage in the garage. My family's always been supportive. And it seems like all my friends were drummers; we would sit around and listen to Led Zeppelin, Rush, and Van Halen albums and turn 'em up to eleven."

Pujalet says his taste in drummers has evolved over the years. "I'm really into the drummers of James Brown," he states. "They were really influential to me. I've always been into drummers who have an undeniable groove—the guys you can feel in your blood—more than the million-notes-per-second guys."

In high school, Pujalet built up his chops jamming with garage bands. "I used to ditch a lot of classes," he admits. "We used to take early lunches whenever one of our parents was out of town, set up our gear, and just play all day. Whoever's parents were out of town, that became the house for band rehearsal. We missed a lot of school. Fortunately, I was able to graduate and go on to college." Pujalet moved south to attend San Diego State University, met bassist Eric Gould in Los Angeles, and now resides in Manhattan Beach, close to where he can get his surfboard in the water on the rare Particle day off.

Building The Base

Gould and Pujalet played together in a band before Particle for about a year. Then they were asked to create an original project for that San Francisco Bay dance cruise, and Particle blossomed out of that. After seven years and eight hundred shows in eleven countries, today Particle is among the most popular acts on the jam-band scene. "Not only have we had a grueling schedule, but we play marathon shows," Pujalet notes. "We did a show at the Bonnaroo festival a couple of

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DARREN PUJALET

"Darren is a very POWERFUL drummer with a jackhammer backbeat. He can also play at a WHISPER all the while maintaining groove depth. I love playing with him. DARREN ROCKS."—Mickey Hart

years back where we played from three until eight in the morning."

It wasn't until 2004 that the band released its debut CD, Launchpad, followed by Transformations Live: For The People in the summer of 2006. "We've been a band that has grown on the road and taken more of a grassroots form," he says. "We're really looking forward to putting out a lot of new material."

Gear Talk

Pujalet plays a blue-sparkle Yamaha Absolute kit with Sabian cymbals, Vater sticks, and Evans heads. "Sometimes I have a couple extra snare drums on my left side," he says, "and I'll turn one over and play it drum 'n' bass style with the snare side up. You have to play it a lot lighter when you do that, but it's a nice effect. And I can drag the tip of my stick back and forth across the snares, and it sounds like I'm scratching.

"I'm using a few electronic pads, too," Darren continues. "But for the most part, as you can see and hear on the Transformations Live DVD, I'm really just trying to take those electronic styles and play them on more organic surfaces. I use some Yamaha electronics, and I have a Roland SPD-S that I use for some loops and triggering different sounds. But I'd say that ninety-five percent of the drum sounds are organically made."

The Future

Particle is currently finishing up their next studio album, which is due out later this year. According to Darren, "It's a bit of a departure for us, but the signature sound and style are still present."

Besides his work with Particle, Pujalet has a side project that features former Grateful Dead drummer/percussionist Mickey Hart. They'll be touring this summer, including a performance at the Gathering Of The Vibes festival in upstate New York. Darren says he feels very fortunate to get to work with Hart. But this up & comer has performed with several top-ranked musicians, including John Popper, Rob Wasserman, and G.E. Smith. And "guests" like Joe Satriani, Robbie Krieger, and DJ Logic have worked with Particle. (All three appear on the Transformations Live DVD.)

"One of the highlights of my career was recording this DVD and having Joe Satriani sit next to my drums all night, just nodding his head," Darren says. "Then he came over afterward and said he really liked my drumming. I'm not really a super-fuzoid player. I do what I can do, and I do it passionately, and it was great for someone of that stature to understand what I do and enjoy it."

For more on Darren Pujalet and Particle, check out these Web sites: particlepeople.com, dronp.com ("Dronp" is Pujalet's nickname), and myspace.com/particle.

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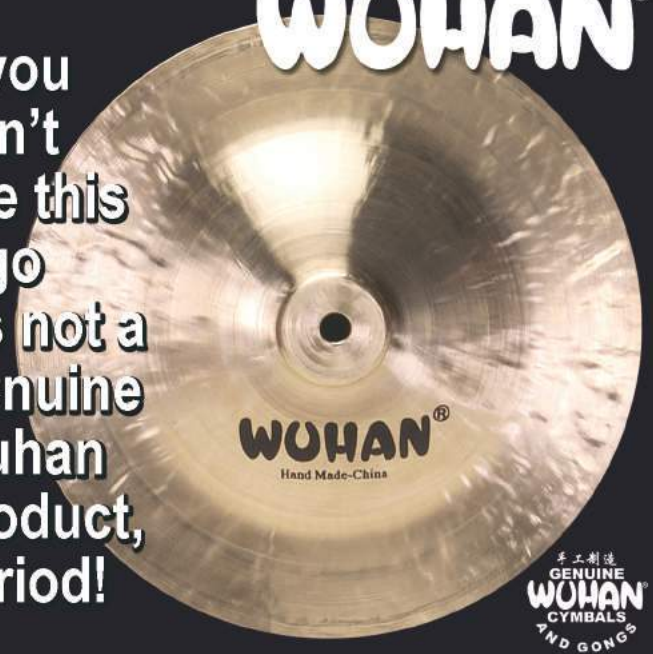

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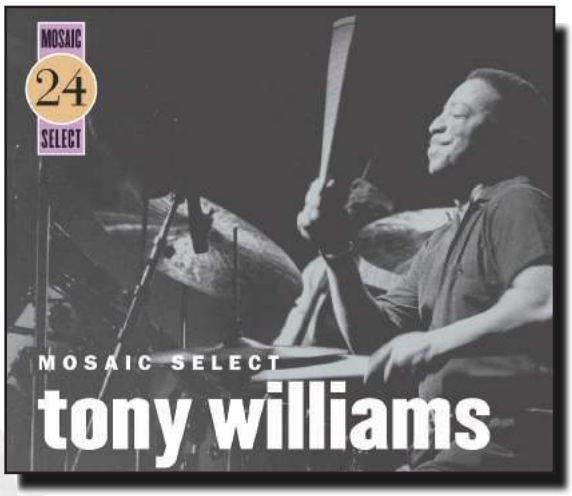

Tony Williams is largely known for his groundbreaking jazz drumming in the 1960s and then his innovative approach to fusion. So revisiting his '80s Quintet recordings—exciting straight-ahead jazz based on Tony's unique sense of rhythm—is an ear-opener. This three-CD set collects the five studio albums Williams recorded during this period. The album *Foreign Intrigue*, recorded in 1985, is notable for Tony's integration of electronic drums within his acoustic kit, adding some interesting voices to his playing. His quintet solidified after this, and the next four albums document their work. There is a joy and energy to their music, as strong tunes written for the group allowed each musician to play their best. Whether swinging hard, accenting melodic figures, or squeezing out blistering single strokes, Williams guides the group through the charts masterfully. Powerful, dynamic, driving, colorful, and flowing throughout, Tony's drumming is simply beautiful. **Martin Patmos**

SWITCHFOOT OH! GRAVITY

★★★½☆

Switchfoot has always had punk leanings, and those traits show through here. With *Oh! Gravity* the band spits nails and vinegar, giving drummer **CHAD BUTLER** ample room to breathe. Cuts like "American Dreams" and "Burn Out Bright" are raucous rockers that find Butler adding super fills. But what's most pleasing about the record is the band's ability to effortlessly shift gears and styles. Through it all the band manages to find their voice with a majority of songs that are purely Switchfoot—and that's a good thing. (Columbia) **Steve Losey**

THE SEA AND CAKE EVERYBODY

★★★½☆

Some of my friends who love the friendly, sophisticated alternative pop of The Sea And Cake nonetheless complain about a certain sameness to their albums. It's an understandable feeling; the band work with a very specific—albeit scrumptious—sound palette. Their latest, *Everybody*, extends their sonic domain a bit. But largely the kicks are still found in the details, especially **JOHN McENTIRE**'s thinking-man's grooves, like the double-time hints on "Too Strong," the interesting kit dynamics on the almost AfroBeat-ish "Exact To Me," and his rolling tom punctuations at the end of "Transparent." You might not need every Sea And Cake album in your collection, but if you're a novice, start here; there's plenty to love, and many rewards to repeated listening. **Adam Budofsky**

MY LATEST OBSESSION
DRUMMERS ON…

RENT'S **JEFF POTTER** ON **PAUL SIMON**

As a reviewer, I'm tempted to fib that my current glove compartment spin-for-fun pile is nothing but cutting-edge. Granted, it's eclectic, spanning Kurt Weill to Wilco. But, closeted truth be told, my latest cruising jag involves revisiting some well-worn '70s MOR. Grabbing two of the impressively remastered Paul Simon discs, *There Goes Rhymin' Simon* and *Still Crazy After All These Years*, the dusted-off cuts were reborn for me. You can't argue with great songwriting. Here are drummers such as Muscle Shoals master **ROGER HAWKINS**, the elegant **GRADY TATE**, and kingpin **STEVE GADD**, creating superlative landmark rhythm tracks. Still classic after all these years.

Jeff Potter can be seen daily in the New York production of *Rent*. Jeff's reviews appear regularly in *Critique*.

THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE QUEEN

★★★½☆

This new outfit, featuring **Damon Albarn** (Blur, Gorillaz), began as a recognizance jam in Nigeria with Fela Kuti/Africa 70 drummer **TONY ALLEN** that blossomed from a desire to chase the globetrotting muse that Albarn, Allen, and former Verve guitarist **Simon Tong** found in Nigeria. With former Clash bassist **Paul Simonon** bobbing and weaving, and **Danger Mouse** playing mad producer/engineer, there's cohesion within an eclectic musical mix. Allen's impact is largely incidental—several tracks are drum-less or machine-driven—yet consistently tasteful. When he taps out the dub groove of "History Song" and pulses the hazy bounce of "Behind The Sun," he's playing to be felt, not heard. Though when the title track speeds out of control, Allen *definitely* grabs your attention. (Virgin) **Patrick Berkery**

JOE ZAWINUL BROWN STREET

★★★★½

Legendary keyboardist Joe Zawinul revisits Weather Report classics with help from big band horns on this superb live date from 2005. But it's his core group that shines. Percussionist **ALEX ACUÑA,** no stranger to the material, has appeared on many classic Weather Report albums, and current Zawinul Syndicate drummer **NATHANIEL TOWNSLEY** provides a solid, head-bobbing groove *and* swings convincingly. And boy, are they tight. Townsley is simply *burning* on "Fast City," his scorching ride pattern and quick singles driving a great sax solo. And Acuna's timbales on the relentlessly funky, samba-esque "Carnavalito" must have had them dancing in the aisles. (Heads Up International) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

PAOLI MEJÍAS TRANSCEND

★★★★½

Following on the heels of a Grammy-nominated disc, Paoli Mejias delivers a one-two knockout. This time out, the conguero/percussionist to the heavies delivers an even *more* daring CD that stretches Latin jazz borders with a mix of world influences. Supported by Paoli's perfect match, stellar drummer **ANTONIO SANCHEZ**, the rhythms dazzle with a masterly balance of power and finesse. With exciting arrangements, unexpected forms, and precision ensemble work, the twists and turns will keep you dazzled. It's complex for sure, but what astonishes most is the effortless fluidity of the multi-rhythms. And don't forget your dancing shoes: The finale blasts off with some G-force salsa. (www.paolimejias.com) **Jeff Potter**

SEVENDUST ALPHA

★★★½

It seems like **MORGAN ROSE** knows what he does best—laying down chunky metallic grooves and smartly launching his double-kick assault only when the song calls for it. That's because on *Alpha,* Sevendust's latest and most melodic outing yet, Rose retains his reign as one of the genre's most solid, no-nonsense hitters. "Feed" has Rose locking right in with the song's ever-changing groove, while "Beg To Differ" shows that Rose really knows when to literally kick it up—and when not to. With so many drummers aiming to win metal's tempo race, it's always refreshing to hear Rose lay it down with substance rather than mere speed. (7Bros/Asylum) **Waleed Rashidi**

BIG BUSINESS HERE COME THE WATERWORKS

★★★½

After being temporarily kneaded into The Melvins' lineup, the Big Business duo of **COADY WILLIS** (drums) and **Jared Warren** (bass/vocals) returns with its second bone-rattling LP. Warren uses all manner of sludgy distortion to give his bass an incurable case of elephantiasis, while Willis helps the two-piece band achieve fullness simply by walloping a huge-sounding kit with strength and attitude. Willis's toms are enormous, his hi-hats slosh in wide-open freedom, and his bell never fails to cut through the chaos. Meanwhile, he smacks his snare with rudiment-rich, marching-band precision on the aptly named "Another Fourth Of July…Ruined." (Hydra Head) **Michael Parillo**

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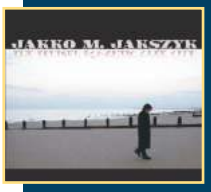

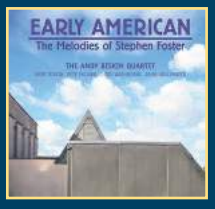

MENOMENA FRIEND AND FOE

Who knows *what* box to put this band in? Indie? Neo-prog? Whatever, it's a fascinating mix of influences, and unlike most other smart bands bored with THE RULES, Menomena never falls into emotionless abstraction; there's always a sense of engagement with the listener. Drummer **DANNY SEIM** does a terrific job accentuating the positive, the negative, the nebulous—whatever vibe the group happens to be going for. Different, and really good. (www.barsuk.com) **Adam Budofsky**

LOVEDRUG EVERYTHING STARTS WHERE IT ENDS

Somewhere between Mute Math and Matchbook Romance lies the sound of Lovedrug. The band's latest, *Everything Starts Where It Ends,* is testimony of a band finding their legs. Drummer **JAMES CHILDRESS** bounces off his snare, adding solid nuances throughout the opus. What's best is when Childress and bassist **Korey Christopher Jones** lock into a groove, like on "Casino Clouds." (The Militia Group) **Steve Losey**

THE DISCO BISCUITS ROCKET 3

Rocket 3 chronicles some of original Disco Biscuit drummer **SAM ALTMAN**'s final jams with the band, New Year's Eve 2005. Altman's solid, snappy, and sometimes showy drumming pulls up even the most lackluster material and lends a raucous energy to the show. (Sci Fidelity) **Robin Tolleson**

JAKKO M. JAKSZYK THE BRUISED ROMANTIC GLEE CLUB

Drummer **GAVIN HARRISON** has been busy lately. This time he's featured on ex-Level 42 guitarist/singer Jakko Jakszyk's new prog-inflected album doing what he does best: slinky odd-time grooves, blazing single kick work, and solos over 21/8. The beautifully recorded, meaty drum sound sparkles throughout various rock timbres and intricate arrangements. (www.jakko.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

KODO HEARTBEAT

Thunderous and thoughtful, explosive and explorative, Japan's KODO ensemble is the premier taiko group in the world. Celebrating their twenty-fifth anniversary, this collection remasters several pieces with super-clear sound, making it a great introduction to the group. From the largest taiko to rhythmic vocalizations, this is exciting music. (Sony) **Martin Patmos**

THE ANDY BISKIN QUARTET
EARLY AMERICAN: THE MELODIES OF STEPHEN FOSTER

Clarinetist Andy Biskin lovingly embraces Stephen Foster's beautifully austere melodies. But watch out! They'll suddenly tumble down a rabbit hole of chamber jazz, spanning the ultra-hip to the zany. Drummer/percussionist **JOHN HOLLENBECK** artfully conquers the quirky challenge. Conjuring a textural kaleidoscope, Hollenbeck smartly mashes the sublime with the raucous. Inventive. (www.strudelmedia.com) **Jeff Potter**

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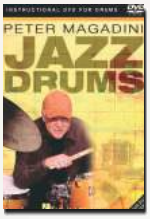


Noted sideman/teacher Magadini guides us through an informal survey of jazz styles, skills, form, and handy pointers best suited for drummers already having a grasp of coordination and reading. Tackling a huge topic in a modest length of time, the DVD/booklet can only skim the surface of its subjects, yet there are plenty of cool nuggets to grab. Most compelling is when Magadini emphasizes relationships between grooves, as when he morphs from an African pattern to swing or uses the same pattern in multiple styles. The swinging quintet numbers are first-rate, as are the duo demonstrations with bass heavy John Heard. (Hal Leonard) **Jeff Potter**

ERIC CLAPTON LIVE AT MONTREUX 1986

DVD LEVEL: ALL $14.98

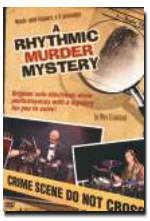
★★★½☆

Before a note is even played, the high-hanging white Gretsch concert toms, in their lefty arrangement, signal the imminent arrival of **PHIL COLLINS**. The drummer joined Clapton's band for just a short time, but his presence was a major coup for Slowhand. Collins gets his share of screen time here, pushing the guitarist to greater heights during his solos and putting his stamp on Cream and Clapton classics. This is the mid-'80s, though, so there are some questionable keyboard sounds (including the unfortunate appearance of a "keytar") and even some cheesy programmed rhythm tracks. But before and after a mid-set stretch of forgettable songs, the band shines. Collins' one solo turn, a singing-and-drumming "In The Air Tonight," is perhaps the most exciting number of all. (Eagle Eye Media) **Michael Parillo**

A RHYTHMIC MURDER MYSTERY FEATURING WES CRAWFORD

DVD LEVEL: BEGINNER $19.99

★☆☆☆☆



Wes Crawford's chops and grasp of electronics are apparent here, but with half of a mask, a fog machine, and a bad script, he won't make anybody forget Wes Craven. Viewers are asked to listen to long, self-absorbed (electronic!) drum solos to help uncover clues in the fictional who-dun-it. Questions relating to bpm, time signatures, sound sources, etc. are awkwardly presented by an annoying announcer and stretched thin around a third grade–level murder yarn. If I'm screaming, it's not out of fear. Who will watch it? What could a drummer get out of this? Where does he get those shirts? A mystery indeed. (MusicAndGames4U) **Robin Tolleson**

ILLUSIONS IN RHYTHM FOR DRUM SET BY OSAMI MIZUNO

BOOK LEVEL: ADVANCED
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★★★½☆

Japanese drummer/educator Osami Mizuno credits Alan Dawson, Tony Williams, and Vinnie Colaiuta (Vinnie also collaborated and contributed to this book) as his inspiration for this 83-page collection of advanced drumset exercises based on teachings of Dawson and advancing into Colaiuta's concepts of "Superimposed Metric Modulation." The idea is to layer one pulse, or time feel, on top of an existing pulse to create the illusion of the time shifting, or creating an imaginary change in time signatures. The exercises (mostly rock, Latin, and shuffle) are well written and fairly well explained, but such advanced concepts really need a sound reference (CD, DVD, etc.) to fully grasp the complex rhythms. As is, this book would be best studied with the help of a knowledgeable private instructor. (www.osami.net) **Mike Haid**

DRUM SET SYSTEMS BY MATT PATUTO

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This 72-page instructional from drummer/educator Matt Patuto covers many crucial basics that other books of this type generally overlook. Common-sense fundamentals of drumset performance are stressed, beginning with warm-ups and proper alignment of the limbs. Patuto's "Steady Flow" system of 16th-note and triplet exercises around the kit are excellent for motor-skill development and learning to create melodic fill ideas. The final chapter, Essential Rhythms, creatively brings the first two chapters together with Patuto's creed to "Count it, sing it, play it," combining ear training and reading skills with a melodic performance approach for each exercise. The accompanying CD is well structured, making it easy to follow along with the various examples in the book. This no-frills indie release is a valuable, affordable gem covering the essentials for developing an organized melodic drumset vocabulary. (www.mattpatuto.com) **Mike Haid**

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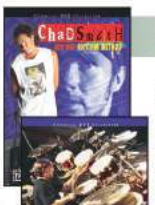

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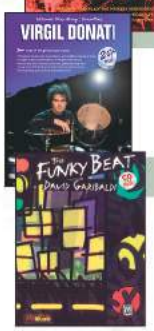

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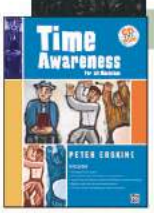

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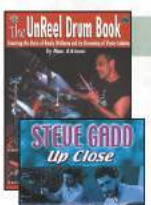

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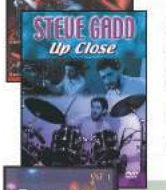

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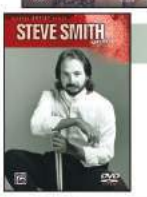

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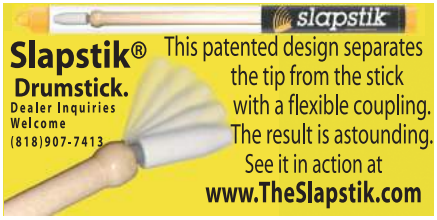
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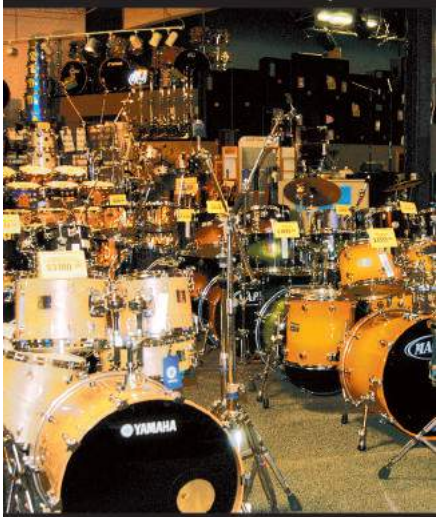

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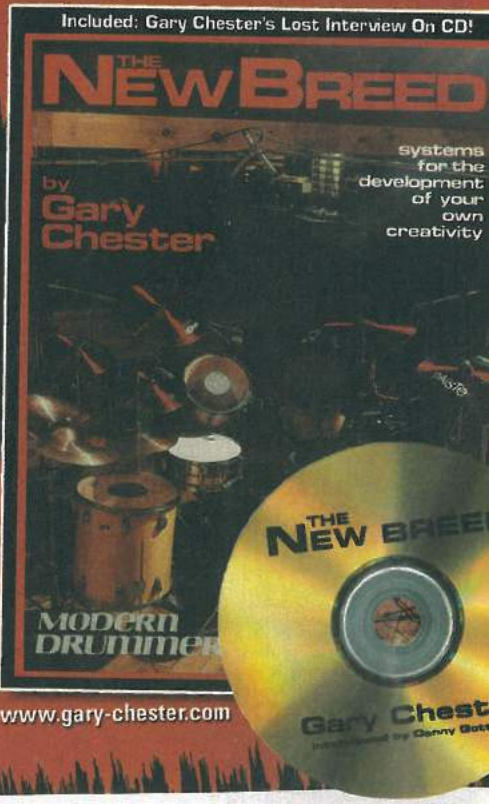

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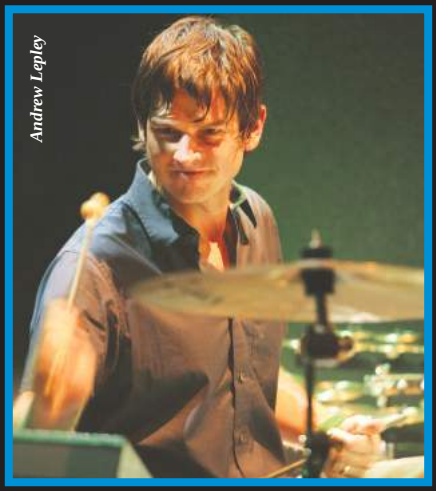

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CAUGHT IN THE WEB!

A Tribute to R&B/Session Great **Yogi Horton**. His friends and colleagues share their thoughts.

2007 Drummers For Jesus

Tommy Aldridge

The 2007 International Drummers For Jesus Celebration was held this past February 16–17 at Irving Bible Church near Dallas, Texas.

First up on Friday's concert were **Aaron Spears** and **Derico Watson**, who played a Gene Krupa/R&B arrangement of "Blessed Be Your Name" with serious authority. Derico then performed "Hallelujah," displaying a precise, crisp style. Aaron returned with a solo piece that wowed the audience with blazing speed and commanding chops.

Groove specialist **Zoro** was accompanied by local rapper Tim Siegel on a tune called "Mighty Lord." Zoro rounded out the performance with a fluid solo over a funky Latin groove. Twelve-year-old **Lil' Mike Mitchell** followed, showing incredible timing and an ability to hang with the star drummers. Following the first set, the great **Louie Bellson** was honored as the first inductee to the DFJ Hall Of Excellence.

Legendary Chicago drummer **Danny Seraphine** opened the second set with a tune he co-wrote with DFJ founder Carlos Benson, "Restoration." Danny displayed a confident style while playing in odd time signatures, then ended with a phenomenal solo accompanied by **C.G. Ryche** on percussion. Danny was followed by the mighty **Tommy Aldridge**, who left everyone speechless with his solid time, thundering double bass work, and powerful fills on "Amphibia V." Tommy closed with a blinding solo, played first with an incredibly tortured pair of sticks and then with his bare hands.

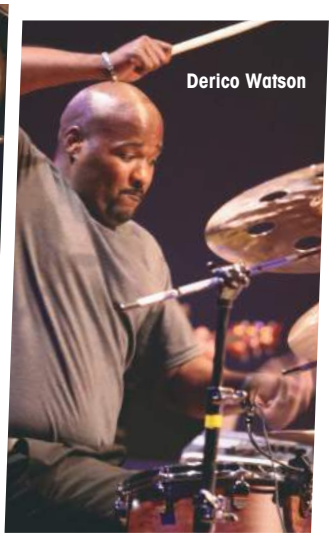
When the roar of the crowd subsided, C.G. Ryche emerged from his percussion cage (which should have its own zip code) and joined a tribe of drummers for an African-style percussion solo called "Drums Of War." This was followed by **Gorden Campbell** grooving hard to a Gospel feel on "Great Day In The Morning." Gorden's solo allowed him to float in and out of time without ever leaving the pocket. The evening closed with DFJ founder **Carlos Benson**, accompanied by **Terl Bryant** and local Dallas powerhouse **Keith Banks**, for worship that brought all the artists back out on stage in a grand finale.

Saturday saw a full day of clinics by the various artists, who took the time to teach, answer questions, and offer unique glances into their personal faith. A DVD of this year's DFJ, as well as information about future events, is available at www.drummersforjesus.com.

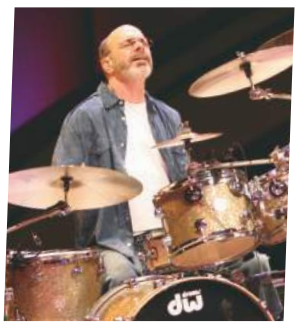
story and photos by Eric Tolliver

Gorden Campbell

C.G. Ryche


Derico Watson

Louie Bellson was inducted into the DFJ Hall Of Excellence



Danny Seraphine

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For locations and registration information, contact your local Yamaha Percussion dealer or log on to www.yamahasoundsofsummer.com.

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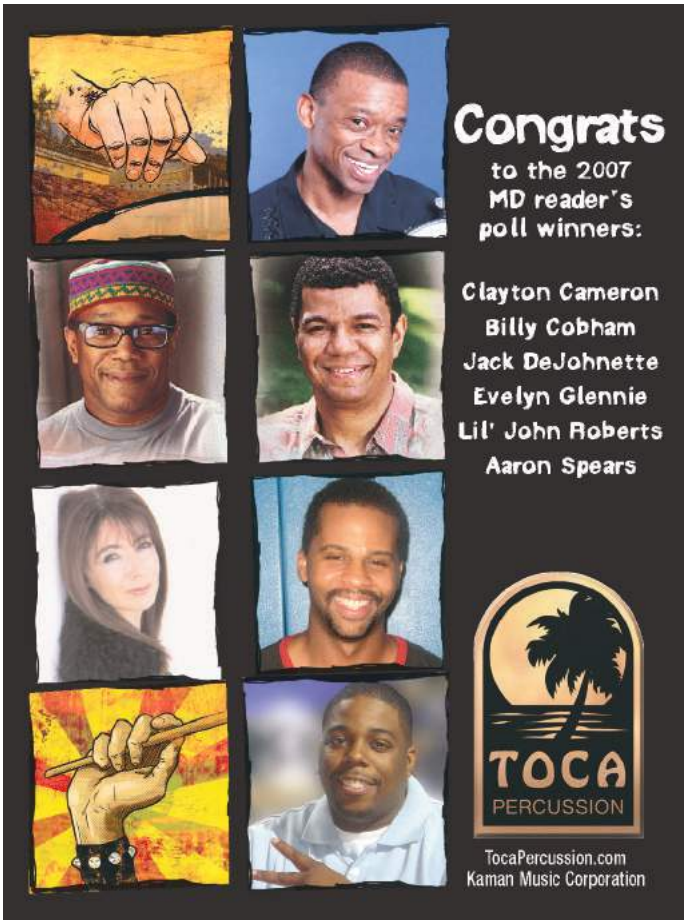
In Memoriam

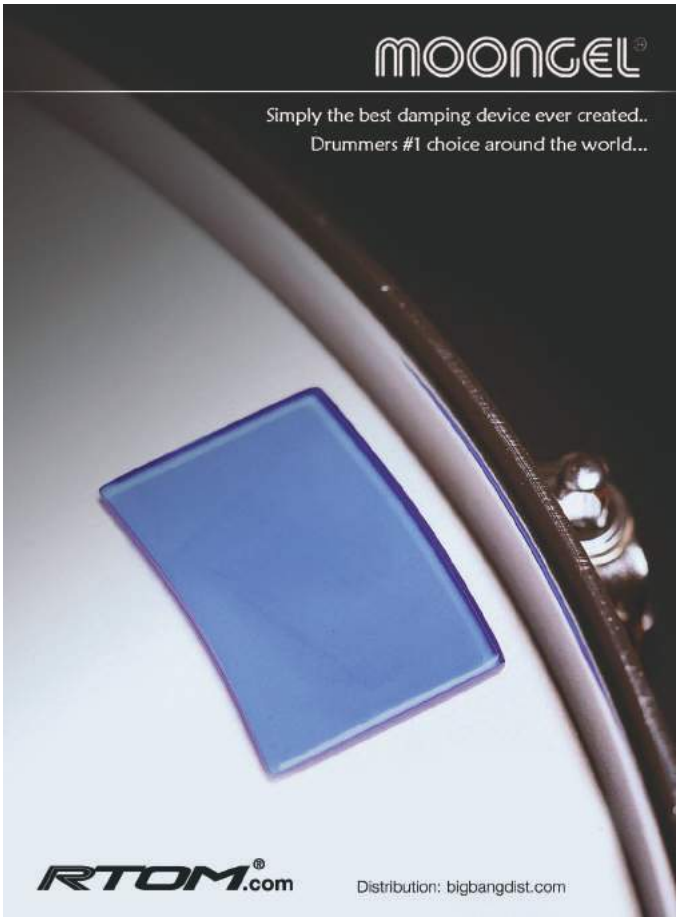
Bobby Rosengarden

Drummer, percussionist, and bandleader Robert "Bobby" Rosengarden died this past February 27 as the result of kidney failure. He was eighty-two.

Rosengarden joined NBC studios in New York in 1940, playing drumset and percussion with the NBC Symphony Orchestra, as well as in the bands on many variety and talk shows. He also toured with Benny Goodman, and he recorded with Duke Ellington, Gil Evans, and Gerry Mulligan. A first-call studio percussionist, Rosengarden played the triangle on Ben E. King's "Stand By Me," conga on Jay & The Americans' "She Cried," and bongos on various Harry Belafonte songs.

Rosengarden left NBC in 1969 to lead the band on ABC's *Dick Cavett Show*. He became famous for his musical jokes, such as playing "Hello Dolly" as the entry cue music for painter Salvador Dali. When Cavett moved to LA in 1974, Rosengarden remained in New York, where he became a popular freelance jazz drummer. He led his own band at the famous Rainbow Room, and he appeared regularly at European jazz festivals until the mid-1990s.





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UK Young Drummer Of The Year

The fifth mikedolbear.com UK Young Drummer Of The Year final competition was held this past February. Judges included drummers **Robin Guy** (Bruce Dickinson), **Bob Henrit** (Argent, The Kinks), **Matt Helders** (Arctic Monkeys), **Karl Brazil** (James Blunt), **Ralph Salmins** (Robbie Williams), and **Darrin Mooney** (Primal Scream).

The judges were presented with a dazzling display of percussive ability from the twelve finalists (out of over 450 original entrants). Each finalist performed a drum solo followed by two ensemble pieces with a guitarist and bassist. Ultimately, the judges awarded the title to sixteen-year-old **Harpal Mudhar**.

The event was sponsored by British fashion magnate and drum enthusiast Peter Werth. Drumkits were supplied by Pacific Drums And Percussion. For more information, visit www.youndrummeroftheyear.com.

Andy Youell

UK Young Drummer Of The Year Harpal Mudhar

UK Young Drummer Of The Year Contest organizers Mike Dolbear (second from left) and Gerry McDonnell (far right), winner Harpal Mudhar (center), and sponsor Peter Werth (back row, left), with contest finalists and judges

Indy Quickies

LP endorser and Kaman party band organizer Richie Gajate-Garcia

The **Kaman Percussion** team—Gretsch, Gibraltar, Toca, and Latin Percussion—recently held their fourth annual artist appreciation party at Center Staging in Burbank, California. The bash included an all-star jam led by percussionist Richie Gajate-Garcia, with Walfredo Reyes Jr. on drums. Guests—including Vinnie Colaiuta, Kevin Ricard, Darius Fentress, and Sheila E (who was in the adjacent studio rehearsing her new band C.O.E.D.)—were treated to impromptu performances by Steve Ferrone, Alvino Bennett, Forrest Robinson, Pete Escovedo, and Taku Hirano.

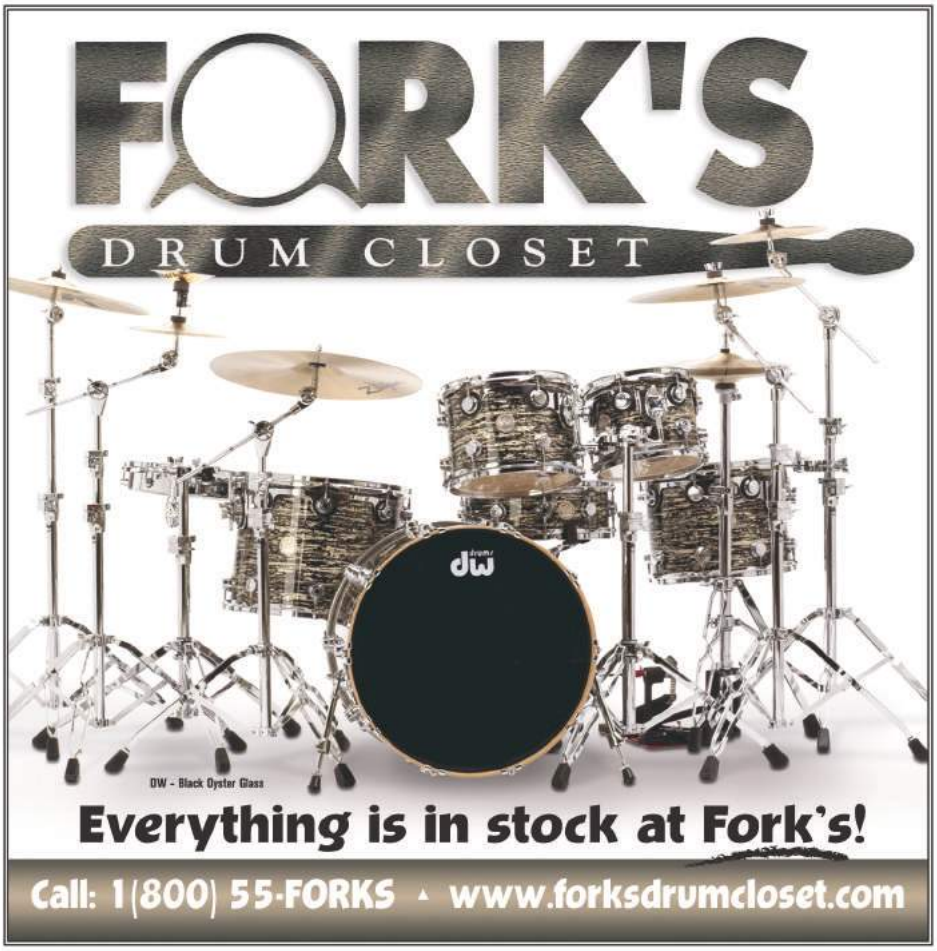
Robyn Flans

Percussionists Stan Smith, Taku Hirano, and Timbali Cornwall

If you hurry, you might be able to catch **Thomas Lang** on his late-May clinic tour sponsored by Roland, Vic Firth, and Hudson Music. Go to www.RolandUS.com and click on "Events And Clinics" for dates and locations.

Woodstick 2006 was successful in breaking the previous Guinness World Record for the number of drummers simultaneously playing full drumkits, at 533. Congratulations to Donn Bennett of Donn Bennett Drum Studio (co-organizer of the event) and everyone else who put together, sponsored, or participated in the event. Woodstick 2007 is slated for Saturday, October 27. Visit www.Woodstick2007.com for details.

Gretsch endorsers Slim Jim Phantom and Steve Ferrone



Who's Playing What

Gorden Campbell (Ne-Yo, R&B great), **Shannon Forest** (Faith Hill), **Chris McHugh** (Keith Urban), and **Jimmy Mouton** (Wilson Braswell Band) are new Yamaha drumset artists. In addition, Boston College's **Screaming Eagles Marching Band** and The University Of Houston's **Spirit Of Houston Cougar Marching Band** are both playing Yamaha marching percussion equipment.

Stillife drummer **Begi George** is playing Risen drums and Silver Fox drumsticks.

New Pearl drummers include **Joe Tomino** (Dub Trio), **Chris Fryar** (Oteil & The Peacemakers), and **Chris Jago** (L.A. production of *Wicked*).

Page Drums has recently added **Kenn Youngar** (Strangleweed) and **Stephen Anderson** (Shachah) to their artist roster.

Vic Firth drumstick artists now include **Lenny White**, **Joey Heredia**, **John Wackerman**, **Sam Aliano** (Ruby James), **Graham Morgan**, **Lemar Carter** (Carrie Underwood), **Rodney Crawford** (Avril Lavigne), **Dan Trapp** (Senses Fail), **Kyle Stevenson** (Helmet), **Patrick Carney** (The Black Keys), **Josh Oliver** (Decyferdown), **Neil Cooper** (Therapy?), **Jon Weber** (Johnny Lives), **Chris Coleman** (Chaka Khan), **Francisco Mela**, **Rich Stizel**, **Chad Wright**, and **Scott Pellegram**.

Pete Coatney (Jack Ingram), **Bobby Drake** (The Hold Steady), **Thommy Price** (Joan Jett & The Blackhearts), **Tom Dreneon** (Daryl Worley), and **Earl Smith Jr.** (Aaron Neville) are Slingerland drumset artists.

Trevor Lawrence Jr. (Snoop Dogg, Alicia Keys), **Jim Keltner** (studio great), and **Felix "D-Kat" Pollard** (Taylor Hicks) are using the Aviom personal monitor mixing system.

There are few things more impressive than those gorgeous machines with their standout colors, stripes and power that the automobile company's call "concept" cars. Unfortunately, the concept seems to be: You want one. You can't have one.

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An Homage To Neil And Mike

This is Marleton, New Jersey drummer Matt Flache' s second appearance in Kit Of The Month. Matt' s " Decade" kit was presented in the September 2003 issue. His newest creation features a 2006 Pearl EXR kit in Gunmetal Sparkle finish, complemented by visually striking Zildjian Titanium cymbals. The design is based on setup influences from Neil Peart and Mike Portnoy.

" I chose to eliminate a tom from my main kick drum," says Matt, " in order to make room for the ride cymbal. Easy access to the ride has broadened my groove development. This idea came from Neil' s setup. The Pearl Quarter Toms and custom rack-style mounting were taken from Mike Portnoy, as was the three–hi-hat arrangement. I have a traditional foot-controlled hi-hat on my left, as well as two stationary hats directly above the ride cymbal. One X-hat is set tight, and the other is set extremely loose, allowing me to achieve two common hi-hat sounds while using both kick drums."

The complete setup consists of fourteen Pearl drums, including a 14" Sensitone snare, a 14" EXR snare, four high-pitched Quarter Toms, and a 13" timbale. There are fifteen Zildjian ZXT Titanium series cymbals, as well as Rhythm Tech aluminum chimes and tambourines (to maintain the silver theme). Pearl blocks and cowbells round out the percussion arsenal.

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. High-resolution (300 dpi) digital photos are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit.

Send photo(s) to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.

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